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F

# HIS ANGEL.

*A ROMANCE OF THE FAR WEST.*



BY

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AUTHOR OF

"SCARLET FORTUNE," "EAGLE JOE," "BETWEEN THE WHIFFS,"

"A LEADING LADY," "FOR OLD VIRGINIA," ETC., ETC.

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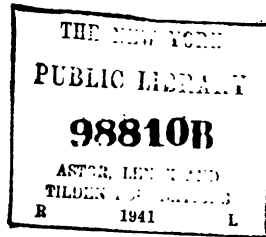
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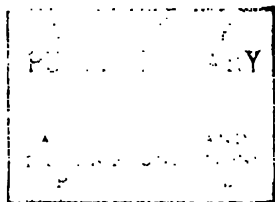
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GO



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"ONE, TWO, THREE, BOYS,—UP!"

(Page 9.)



## HIS ANGEL.

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*SIXTEEN YEARS BEFORE.*

“**J**OE ROBINSON ! The boys have allus called yew ‘Hellfire Joe,’ an’ I reckon as the devil himself cayn’t deserve it more’n yew do. Yew’re jest the dogderneDEST scoundrel as ever drewed a knife on a man between Santa Fé and the Platte ; but I count yew’re euchred smart, an’ yew ain’t a-goin’ to do no more killin’,—no, sirree, not another bit. Yew an’ yewr pardner, Mike, have bin found guilty of shootin’ poor Tim O’Riarty, an’ of stealin’ his hoss an’ fixins, an’ yew’re goin’ to be strung up by the neck, old sonnie, on that red

oak over thar, the one that Harry Murphy's a-swingin' the rope on to now ; an' when we catch Mike, I'll promise yew that we'll sarve him right slick as we're a-doin' to yew, no better, nor no wuss. He won't want to steal no more dollars to buy whisky with, nor no trappin's neither when we've done with him, yew bet. Now, Hellfire Joe, if so maybe as yew remember sich a thing as a pray'r—though if I wos to be asked my opinion, I'd say as it's cussin' yew're a purtier hand at by a long shot—yew fix up yewr hind sight square, an' say the soapiest pray'r yew know, cos yew'll want it whar yew're goin' to—by gosh, that yew will—for yew're goin' under, Hellfire Joe, this journey, an' no error. Wagh !”

The words fell like drops of gushing molten lead upon the quivering ears of a craven, quaking wretch, who with his hands tied behind his back, and his legs secured by hobbles of hide, cowered against the stump of a tree, and twisted and writhed in the uselessly



mad endeavour to free his pinioned limbs. His was a villainous face, rendered animally abject by fear and rage. Blood streamed from an ugly gash on his forehead, and the bone of the cheek was laid nearly bare by the savage cut of a knife. The muscles of the mouth twitched in agonised terror, the lips were open and quivered nervously, the eyes, shaded by their big shaggy brows, were half hidden by the convulsively moving lids. As he shrank and curved his body, one could still see that he was a tall man, thin, lean, and wiry. His blood-besmeared buckskin clothing hung in shreds and rags from his body, evidence of the desperate fight he had made before he was secured, if his wounds and the lifeless body of a frontiersman, lying stiff and stark by the hut-side, the face covered by a broad-brimmed black hat, had not been sufficient proof.

“Damn yew, Dan Kershaw,” he cried hoarsely. “Damn yew, sons of hounds, all of yew. Hang me, but don’t sass me.”

His fury broke his voice, and he glared around him in a seething, silent rage.

"If yew're in a hurry, Hellfire Joe," replied Kershaw quietly, totally unmoved by the doomed scoundrel's invective, "we ain't. Thar's bin a mighty lot o' decent people as had to stand yewr jaw, an' yewr villainy—Christians, an' Jews, an' Yankees, an' red men. Yew was some, I reckon, with that all-fired, filthy tongue o' yewrn when yew made a raise o' honest men's dollars; but now we've struck our coup, an' yew've got to lose yewr top-knot, an' I guess, Hellfire Joe, whether yew like or whether yew swash it, yew've got to sample my sass, an' the hangin' as wal."

He rose from the fallen log on which he had been sitting, and stood there, with his hands in the pockets of his buckskin trousers, a brawny, handsome giant. A noble, leonine head his—with a mane of golden hair, here and there streaked with silver, falling over his shoulders—with a clean-shaven, round, ruddy,

jovial, good face, brimming with good humour even at that awful moment. Those big, grey-brown eyes could sparkle with determination and courageous fire, but even as he spoke thus lightly they became stern at the sight of the wriggling, dastardly ruffian, whose career of crime was to be cut short.

Seven or eight big, bearded frontiersmen, habited like their leader in fringed buckskin trousers and bead-embroidered, fringed, Mexican hunting shirts of similar material, were sitting on tree stumps or low rocks, or standing about, leaning on their rifles and calmly smoking their pipes. At a distance of some dozen yards, their horses were browsing tranquilly among the high grass, being hobbled, Indian fashion, by strips of raw hide.

Hellfire Joe had been tracked, and hunted too, and caught in his own home, in the rude log-hut which he himself had built against a low sandstone bluff on the upper Canadian. The gorgeous New Mexican vegetation throve

luxuriantly all about it, and hid it with a veil of dense foliage and bloom from the prying gaze of the hunter or trapper who passed on the bluff above or on the river below. Roof and sides were smothered with verdant showers of fruit-bearing vines and of brilliantly flowering creepers. Woodbine, unicorn plant, and wild currant surged all about it in vari-coloured billows between shady mulberries and papaw trees, that drooped with their loads of delicious fruit. At a distance of a few yards, the dull, pale red flood of the river was fringed by a line of sycamores and big red oaks, their roots hidden in a green, golden-crested sea of sun-flowers. On the other side of the stream the plain rolled away, an arid, brownish-green expanse, dotted all over with mighty, shrubby, purple-flowered cactuses, looking for all the world like groups of monstrous sentinels watching over the prairies.

In the golden evening sunlight that bathed the place as with a flood of soft glory—in the

midst of this scene of man's fierce and bloody justice—nature was alive with the voice of peace. The mocking-bird made chirping melody in the shelter of his perfumed thicket ; by the river side egrets, herons, and pelicans called to their mates in shriller tones ; and red-birds, wood-peckers, cliff-swallows, and king-fishers chattered winging from tree to tree. A solitary raven sat on the branch of an oak near by, sombre, black, listless, barely deigning now and then to move his beak ; whilst high overhead circled half a dozen great, greyish-dun vultures, at times swooping nearer earth, as if already aware that one who had been created in God's image was about to become mere buzzard's food, and impatient to grip their own with their sharp, steel-like claws.

The rope, with its ghastly running noose, dangled loosely from the sturdy oak branch, and a couple of stalwart frontiersmen swung themselves to and fro on it by clinging to it with their hands, to make sure that both hemp



and wood were strong enough to do their work swiftly and without chance of failure. The oaken bough bent and creaked just a trifle, but it bore its double burden without a sign of undue strain, and the trappers jumped down on to the bank among the reeds and the broad grass and the sprouting sun-flowers and cone-flowers.

The doomed man had followed their movements feverishly, every limb shaking in abject fear. A cold perspiration pearled on his forehead, and a cry of despair escaped from his lips, as Kershaw, with the stolidity which had previously marked him, said,—

“If yew ain’t got nuthin’ more to say, Hell-fire Joe, we’ll finish the job an’ git. Yew can do all the cussin’ yew want when yew land whar yew’re a-goin’ to. But I don’t reckon as they’ll ’low much o’ yewr cheek even thar, when they once come to know yew. Now boys, up with him!”

A brawny arm encircled the struggling man

on each side, and a pair of irony hands gripped him at the back of the neck. Two more at his feet, and he was borne, feebly kicking, and writhing like a worm, to the foot of the tree where he was to meet his doom. The horrid noose was slipped around his throat, and he gasped in anticipatory terror as it touched his skin. A merciless hand tightened it roughly, and then at the dread words, "One, two, three, boys,—Up!" half a dozen men tugged with all their might at the other end, and Joe Robinson was sped into eternity.

They stood about the convulsively quivering body as it swung in the lazy stir of the wind, until the twitching movements became slower and fewer, and it hung at last lifeless, and nearly still.

Then they gently raised the dead body of their comrade, who had been slain by the tracked murderer, and placed it securely across the back of a mule to carry it to a resting-place where the desecrating marauders of the

air and of the field would be unable to prey upon it.

They were already seated on their horses, waiting their leader's orders to ride homewards. Kershaw gave one last look upon the scoundrel whose blood-stained career sluggard frontier justice had thus fiercely interrupted.

They were in the shadow of the great trees, but the fiery sheen of the waning sun pierced the foliage, and a wide band of reddish golden light illumed the entrance of the little hut. All around was sober green and brown, cool and dark, but that humble doorway fairly glowed, as in a scintillating, prismatic glory.

And in the midst of the broad gleaming streak of light, as in a halo, a round little face—a pretty, dark-eyed face, the face of a tiny girl—smiled in innocent, babyish wonderment. She was crawling on her hands and knees, looking out upon the big men and the big horses—not in the least frightenedly, but inquiringly.

"What daddie doin' thar?" she asked in quaint child's prattle, raising herself and sucking the corner of her frock. "Me want daddie tome down."

"By the everlastin' painted Jingo!" exclaimed Kershaw half confusedly. "That's Hellfire Joe's kid. I'd forgot all about her. What's to be done with her?"

He jumped from his horse, and picked her up gently, as if afraid to break or injure her, and took her in his strong arms.

"I reckon it ain't yewr fault as yewr father was a scoundrel," he said. "An' I do bet a plew as it ain't no loss to yew that he's gone afore yew got to know him. I guess I'll have to take kear o' yew now. Wal, I don't mind."

And the child stroked the face of the man who had ordered her father's death.

## CHAPTER I.

### *A KING AMONG GIANTS.*

THE Eastern Express was flying New Yorkward, the lights of its cars a streak of gleaming dots in the black, starless night, and its million of sparks a fiery trail in its track, like the tail of a comet. The rain spattered, and splashed, and hissed in great blotches against the steam-obscured window panes, and the wind howled in a tornado as the huge locomotive ploughed its way against the sullen force of the raging elements. The thunders crashed, and cracked, and roared, and rumbled, and forked lightnings throbbed and quivered on the inky expanse above, breaking the blackness that prevailed by moments of fierce, weird, white, calcium-light-like glow, in

which every tree, every bush, every fence, every telegraph pole, stood out sharp and black in the suddenly illuminated landscape.

| In the comfortable little reserved compartment at the farther end of the sleeping-car, sat a fine, hale, old gentleman, and a dainty, pretty, young lady. Father and daughter evidently; she was too young to be his wife—but that the old man loved her, doted on her, was betokened by every fond glance, by every happy, contented smile. A tall, broad-shouldered, handsome old man, a very king among giants such as are bred in the vast plains of the Far West, with a clean-shaven, open, noble, manly face crowned by a flowing mass of wavy, silver-white hair that rippled and rolled over his shoulders, with flashing grey-brown eyes that looked straight into the face of the questioner, and, chasing all doubt, left their imprint of truth upon the mind. Good-heartedness, good nature, and good humour brimmed and creamed on every line;

honesty, sterling and unturnable, was emblazoned there as on an escutcheon of the soul; but there were written on those features also the marks of indomitable courage, of endurance and self-denial; altogether the face of a man into whose keeping one would have unflinchingly and undoubtingly given one's honour, one's life, and have slept soundly in the surety of their safety.

The girl was a frail and delicate creature of some nineteen summers, slender of figure and waist, with tiny, pointed, psychic, rosy-tipped hands, and mites of feet. A lovely face, full of tender feminine charm and witchery, a little languid perhaps, the result of some past ailment no doubt, for sorrow in that noble, loving old man's care she would have none. The big, dark, lustrous eyes were soft and dreamy, the lips a trifle pale and thin, but always half open in a nascent smile. Her hair, dark, glossy, and curly, might, farther south, beyond Mason and Dixon's line, have been taken as

proof of remote African descent, but out on the prairies, and in the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains, it was accepted as heritage from a Mexican mother. Her dress was of the simplest and plainest, grey, woollen, home-spun stuff the material, and the girl's own dainty fingers had fashioned it.

That the old man and his daughter were persons of importance and renown was evidenced by the assiduous care and consideration shown to them by the conductor, and by the half-stealthy curiosity and inquisitiveness exhibited on their especial behalf by the other passengers of the train—the female portion preponderating.

The conductor was fairly besieged by questioning beauty, young and old.

“Was Mr. Kershaw going to New York?”

“He was.”

“Was Miss Kershaw going all the way with him?”

“She was.”



"Did he know if Miss Kershaw was going to live in New York?"

"He did not know."

"Did he think he could find out?"

"He didn't think he could."

"How provoking! But a simple question could do no harm."

"It might and it mightn't. It wasn't his business."

Then there flashed quite a volley of captivating and convincing smiles.

"He was a dear, nice, good-looking young man, and they were sure he would make it his business."

"He was in the habit of minding his own business, and how nice it would be if everybody else in the world would do the same."

And the conductor having gone his way, inquiring beauty, young and old, dubbed him an uncivil, unobliging, ugly young brute.

It was a matter of some considerable interest to female society whether or not Miss Angelica

Kershaw was about to change her Western home for one in Manhattan City. It was well known that builders, carpenters, cabinet-makers, painters, decorators, and upholsterers had, for months past, been busy in a handsome uptown residence, the newly built property of Mr. Daniel Kershaw, the famous Colorado millionaire. Up to now Mr. and Miss Kershaw had been living out West, in Angelica City, a thriving, bustling, prosperous township, sheltering some twenty thousand souls.

Angelica City had sprung up mushroom-like overnight, so to say, during the Pike's Peak rush, and now it boasted every necessary attribute of a Western city, from a church and a sawmill to a theatre and a circus ground. A limpid, swift-flowing stream, Red Ore Creek, divided it into an eastern and a western town, the former humming with work-a-day life, the latter the chosen abode of the wealthy. East Angelica City was principally inhabited by traders, manufactures, and the German

and Irish workmen who laboured in the fields, in the saw and ore mills, and in the mines. West Angelica City boasted of quite a number of handsome, ornate residences, each of them snugly stowed away in its own shady, well-sheltered garden. The massive stone bridge which spanned Red Ore Creek, and afforded a broad means of communication between the two portions of the town, was called Angelica Bridge. The principal square of the city bore the same appellation. There was an Angelica Avenue, an Angelica Street, and an Angelica Road.

If the wondering stranger had asked the reason of this kind of epidemic of the name of Angelica, he would have received a pleased and smiling reply. He would have been told that the inhabitants of Angelica City delighted thus to honour a young lady whom they all loved and revered, that wherever it was possible to give the name of Angelica to a building, to a locality, to any place whatsoever

or wheresoever, the name was eagerly thus emblazoned. And had the wondering stranger asked who was the young lady so popular, he would have been looked upon with amazement. Not to have known Angelica Kershaw, or Angel Kershaw, as they all fondly called her, was worse than to have argued himself unknown. For Daniel Kershaw was lord of Angelica City, its founder, its owner, and its king, and Daniel Kershaw's lovely daughter was Angelica City's sweet idol.

No hospitable and open-handed chatelaine of feudal times, no sainted dispenser of charity, dwelling in mediæval abbey or cloister, was ever more beloved or revered by all who knew her than was Angel Kershaw. Her popularity had grown with the ripening years of budding womanhood, and had left her as simple, as unpretentious, and as untainted by female vanity as a violet that spreads its perfume unseen, from amid the verdure that shelters it. Would she remain as natural, as tender, and as

simple-minded in the East, or would excitement, more or less unwholesome, brush away the bloom from the natural rose of her loveliness, would town cynicism and pretentious later-day philosophy take the place of homely sentiment, would Angelica City's Angel remain unsoiled beneath the contaminating touch of Gotham's gaudy glories ?

The old man sat in one corner of the little compartment, drinking happiness as he glanced at his Angel, dwelling on her with contentedly beaming eyes as she bent in hushed interest over the book she was reading. He would have dearly liked to question her about the story which so seemed to fascinate her. He was not a man of books, in the light-reading sense at any rate. United States Survey reports, Mining Engineers' reports, Stock Exchange quotations, financial pamphlets, and the Bible and hymn-book were the only volumes which he ever opened for personal perusal. He had, once upon a time, com-

menced to wade through a novel, but before he had come to the fourth page he had declared the heroine a "conceited, washed-out hussy," and as he had reached the sixth he had thrown away the book in disgust, writing down the hero a "derved jackass as a Dutch greenhorn was a fool to." But his Angel was a good judge of men and women as they lived and thrived, and what interested Angel was a matter of import to him.

The rolling, roaring thunder crashed on in unceasing, unrelenting fury, and the train hissed through the deluge that swept down upon it from the inky heavens. Once already speed had been slackened, and the carriages had nearly come to a standstill, the passengers with anxious faces inquiring of one another whether aught was amiss; but the stoppage was merely temporary, and after growling, and sputtering, and grumbling for a space of two or three minutes, the great engine puffed on again eastward.

At the next depôt, a small cross-country station, the train was brought to a standstill. The place was not marked for stoppage in the time-tables, and the travellers became speedily aware that half-hushed consultations were being held between the officials of the depôt and those in charge of the train. A whispered statement quickly went the round of the carriages that the question had arisen whether or not the long trestle bridge over which the train would have to pass about two miles from their present stopping place had not been weakened by the terrible force of the elements that raged around it. It had been examined, hour after hour, as well as the work could be done under the awful stress of the weather, but nothing but the passage of the train itself could decide if it was really still safe.

Presently the locomotive was cast loose from the rest of the cars, and the passengers saw it steam away into the night, leaving them in the darkness of the platform, which the half-dozen

oil lamps that were intended to illuminate it only rendered blacker.

Half an hour of uncomfortable waiting and the engine returned. It had steamed slowly over the trestle-work from one end to the other, and had come back without the slightest sign of weakness, or breach, or unsafety being discovered.

The passengers, who had been standing about the car platforms, braving the wind and the rain in the endeavour to satisfy their excited curiosity, returned to their seats and their bunks, and prepared themselves to sleep. It was nigh on midnight, and the train would not again stop for three hours at least.

Daniel Kershaw had been as concerned as the rest of the journeyers about the movements of the officials, and about the danger which was supposed to loom ahead. Not for himself—he had looked death in the face so often with calm eye and unmoved muscle that the present threatening mischance would scarcely have



disturbed his rest, had he travelled alone. But his Angel, his love, his joy, his glory, was with him, and that a hair of her head might be injured was a thought which called up a trepidation more disturbing than a hundred howling, black-bepainted savages could have done.

She was so far away in the cloudland of fancy, as fashioned for her by the book she was reading, that she barely noticed the stoppage of the train.

"Anything the matter, daddie?" she asked half uninterestedly, and scarcely waited for the reply, "It ain't nuthin' of any consequence as need disturb you, Angel," before she was away again in the fairyland of the nineteenth-century novel.

The engine was re-hitched to the baggage-van, and slowly the train moved away on its road to the coast. The storm howled as furiously as ever, and the great drops splashed and sputtered and clattered against the carriage

windows. The deafening crashes of the thunder and the grating rumble of the wheels, the puffing and panting of the engine and the savage howl of the wind combined in an ear-breaking whirl in which all other sounds became speedily mute and indiscernible. It was impossible to know whether they were going fast or slowly, but the ever-increasing oscillation of the carriages soon proved to Daniel Kershaw that they were upon the trestle bridge, the passage of which was portentous of hidden and undefinable danger.

Apprehensive thoughts crowded upon his mind as his experience began to tell him that the irregularly rocking movements of the car betokened a disturbed and unsafe condition of the frail wooden trestle-work which had to bear the weight of the train and the force of the storm at the same time. Would the creaking timbers be able to sustain the strain for the few brief seconds during which the carriages passed over each, or would one of them snap,

and break, and drag the rest of the structure, and the cars that swept over it, and the human freight they bore, to black destruction?

The sense of danger — of danger to his Angel—roused his inborn faculty of quick decision, and made his nerves as strings of steel in the calm calculation of chances of escape, of means of safety in case of accident. With a quick eye he examined the window, the door, the fittings; he gauged the thickness and power of resistance of the wooden walls. He wished to avoid frightening his child, but, nevertheless, he rose, and without saying a word, threw over her shoulder the big soft buffalo robe that had been lying in his bunk. He wrapped it around her smilingly, and as mutely added his Scotch plaid travelling rug to the first covering.

Angel looked at him in amused wonder.

"What's this for, daddie?" she asked.

"I'm not cold."

"Never mind, my dearie," he replied re-

assuringly. "Jest sit thar like that for tew or three minutes, to please me."

He was still stooping over her, arranging with uncertain, fumbling fingers the fur he had placed around her, when, on a sudden, a crash more deafening than the thunders clove through the howl of the tornado, and the car jumped madly and stood on end.

Another second, and with a din as if the bottomless pit had opened and was belching forth its infernal yells and screeches, they were flung violently against the sides of their compartment and against one another, and then amidst a whirlwind of crashing and smashing, of creaking and breaking, they fell, car and all, through space. The terrible rebound, as they touched a hard resistance, shook them like rats in a cage, and stunned them; and the splintering wood, iron, and glass dashed and flew about them, and piled themselves around them, crushing and tearing through clothing and through flesh, until Daniel Ker-

shaw felt a sensation at his throat as if ice-cold fingers were clutching it, and stiffening around it, and choking him. Bloody sparks floated across his eyes; he fitfully touched his face with a nervous hand, and found that a warm moisture was trickling from a wound.

Where was his child? He called to her, but there was no reply. He strained his sense of hearing, and endeavoured with his voice to pierce the deafening uproar that made a hell on earth about him, but he could not elicit a responsive sound. Was she wounded? Was she dead? God! what agonizing terror was hidden in that thought! Would that he could die in her stead! Would that his life might be accepted in the place of her young blossoming girlhood! He made a frantic effort to move to reach her, but something gripped his legs and held them as in a vice, and something else pressed upon his side and shoulder and kept him powerless, unable to stir.

Gradually the diabolic roar about him relaxed its deafening clamour, and over and above the weird rushing of the wind and rain Kershaw could hear awesome, blood-curdling, heartrending cries and pitiful, wailing moans. Men's voices also reached him in indistinct tones; but the blackness was so dense all about him, and the sense of pain fastened itself so mercilessly upon him, that his power of discernment was nearly extinct. The pressure upon his shoulder and chest tightened and crushed him. His breath became scarce and scanty, and he felt as if even in the darkness he was going blind, when he perceived a lurid streak that broke through the pitchy gloom—a narrow, red, gleaming line that burst through the blackness which shrouded him. Then the horrible truth dawned upon him, and, for one brief second, the dull, stony despair that chilled his marrow overpowered him, and he cried out against his Maker for having deserted him. The red glow became fiercer and more fiery,

the air more stifling; a suffocating vapour began to enwrap him, and he knew that the car in which he was imprisoned was on fire, and that the red streak was as much as at that moment he could see of the conflagration through a rent in the partition of the compartment.

Then the atmosphere became denser, the smoke rolled through the chink in suffocating cloudlets, he gasped in the vain endeavour to retain consciousness—if only for his child's sake—and whilst he mechanically muttered, “Angel! Angel! Angel! Angel!” the all around—the broken car, the splintered woodwork, even the hellish, red streak, were gone, and he knew no more.







"NEVER FOR A MOMENT RELAXED THE SWINGING BLOWS OF HIS AXE."

(Page 31.)

## CHAPTER II.

### *AND FROM THESE FLAMES CAME LIGHT.*

**C**RASH, crash, crash! Crash, crash, crash! Somewhere overhead the woodwork of the car was flying in splinters under the rapid swing of an axe, and as Daniel Kershaw looked up in a dazed pain, he saw a dark figure raining blow after blow upon the broken roof of his prison. It was no longer night, but a fierce, hellish glare raged and roared and hissed; the red, angry flames darted all around and seemed to lick the black figure that, unaffrighted and undaunted by their scorching touch, never for a moment relaxed the swinging blows of his axe against the opening which he had cut, and through which the cool night air streamed down upon the feverish brow of

the injured man and revived his expiring faculty of thought.

In the near distance, now and then veiled from sight by the rushing, sputtering flames, and by the dense pall of the smoke, other figures seemed to be at work ; but the old man's pain was so intense that he looked upon them with uninterested eyes. The figure above him fascinated his gaze. If his Angel were alive—which whether to answer yea or nay he knew not, nor dared—*there* was succour and possible safety. Amidst the torturing anguish which stifled him and stung him, and clawed at his heart as with eagles' talons ; amid the anticipating horror which hammered against his head and left him stunned and powerless, he felt with a nearly animal instinct that if it were ever granted him to see his child again alive, upon that black figure he would have to look as her saviour.

How he followed with burning eyes the splinters as they flew ! How he watched the

breaking timber as piece after piece was removed and the opening grew bigger each moment, and more and more fresh air swooped upon him, the fierce heat of the roaring flames notwithstanding. Brave as a lion himself, how he admired the indomitable courage and endurance of the man whom the singeing tongues of fire could not affright, whom the scorching heat could not hinder in his task of succour, and who worked on, undaunted and undeterred by the ghastly dangers which encompassed him.

Across the spiderweb-like chaos of jagged beams, of wrenched and twisted iron standards intermixed with huge black pieces of wood work, he tried to peer into the open night and to grasp in his confused mind the position in which he lay; for whether the car had been flung on its side, on its roof, or otherwise, he could not at that moment gather. By discovering his own exact position he might perhaps be able to reach his Angel. How his

heart thumped in spite of his own bodily pain, and how he endeavoured to listen amid the hubbub that prevailed for a sound from her! The burning moments were ghastly years of fiendish torture, and the great, strong, brave man, in his soul-grating agony and doubt, felt the tears streaming down his face to mingle with the blood that was flowing from his wound.

“Hallo! down there. Answer me if you’re alive.”

The bluff, cheery voice of the man who, bending on his knee, looked down upon him, dragged Daniel Kershaw from his pall of anguish.

“I’m alive,” he breathed faintly. “But my girl! my Angel!”

“There are two of you, then? Keep your pluck up. The worst is over. Can’t you move?”

“No,” replied the old man. “I’m jammed in on the legs and on the shoulder. But my

girl! my Angel! A thousand dollars! Ten thousand dollars! A hundred thousand dollars if you save her!"

"Oh, I don't want your money," was the laughing reply. "I'll get her out all right if she is to be got out. Where is she?"

"I can't say," Kershaw gasped. "I can't see her. I can't feel her. I can't hear her."

The man above gave a long, low whistle.

"That's awkward," he exclaimed. "Never mind, we'll make a good try for it. Here, boys, lend a hand here; there are lives to be saved.

The flames crackled and roared and hissed a little less furiously, and the changing wind for a moment carried them and the smoke in the opposite direction. Kershaw could see two other dark figures jump upon the frail framework which roofed in the place where he lay confined.

"We'll have to be careful, lads," cried the first man. "That gentleman's caught badly

between that broken beam and the wheel that's got through the carriage bottom, and there's a young lady down there—God only knows where."

The work of clearing and breaking away the overhanging, threatening network proceeded slowly. All around him, as the anger of the elements became more hushed, Kershaw could hear the bitter, low moans of the wounded and the dying, with now and then a heartrending shriek crashing shrill upon the ear. The bitter eternal moments through which he passed! He could see the young man who had first come to his aid, blood-stained, his face blackened, scorched, and swollen, his hair and beard singed to the roots, his eyes bloodshot, his arms torn and bleeding from contact with jagged iron and glass, his clothing a heap of shreds and rags, working away as cheerily and undauntedly as ever, encouraging and guiding those who were about him. Nothing was unduly hurried, nothing was done wrong.

A sharp eye and a quick-witted mind directed every action, and whatever was done, whatever was removed, brought rescue and safety one step nearer.

"Mind your eye, sir," at last cried the young man, "and don't budge. We've got to get that partition beam away. It's that that's crushing you."

Three pair of strong arms did willing work, and Daniel Kershaw felt a load, heavy as Atlas, removed from him. But with the intense relief vouchsafed to him by the displacement of the torturing pressure, there came also a sense of undefinable pain; a heart-stopping sensation crept over him and numbed him. He tried to grasp, to see, but he was blind and his breath failed him. He could barely raise his trembling fingers to his head, then all became black to him, and the men who had come to his aid had to drag a seemingly lifeless body from the confused mass of wreckage where they had found it.



When the wounded millionaire opened his eyes again, he was lying on a small pile of sacking at a distance of some dozen yards from the broken trestle bridge and the ruined train. A confused feeling possessed itself of him, in which his own identity, and the strange locality, and the weird circumstances in which he found himself, were hopelessly and inextricably intermixed. With his first reasoning pulsation, the word "Angel" throbbed to his lips, and, God of mercies! there she stood, right by his side, holding out her arms to him, bending over him, looking down upon him with those great loving eyes of hers, and he knew not whether Heaven, in its pity, had worked a miracle for him, or whether he was dreaming. And she stooped and kissed him, and smoothed his tangled, blood-besmeared hair, and he threw his arms around her and kissed her again and again in such mad joy as only surges to men's hearts on occasions of gaunt terror like these; and then the very

might of his glad emotion fought to dash his senses from him, and weakened by loss of blood, overcome by his ecstasy, he nigh fainted again.

“You see we pulled her out for you, sir,” said the young fellow who had rescued them both. “What a bundle of skins and rugs she was! It was that that saved her. There she lay, as snug as a new-born babe, in that bunk, and nothing near her to touch her—only frightened and in a faint. By Jingo! it *was* a near shave. If the wheel that jammed you in had broken through six inches nearer, there would have been nothing left of her but little crushed bones.”

When the first shock of the rapturous agony had glided past him ; when the joyful awe of the living recognition had not snapped the over-strained nerves, the eased heart-strings vibrated with tenderer, softer music, and the homely, natural piety of the pioneer brought to the refreshed mind the remembrance of an

all-watchful, all-merciful Maker of all things. The lion-hearted frontiersman, brimming with welling gratitude towards the great Lord of life and death for the safety of his Angel, threw himself upon his knees on the soaked ground, his stinging pains and his half-overpowering faintness notwithstanding, and lifting his hands in prayerful thankfulness, cried fervently, "Praise be to Thee, Almighty Father! Hallowed be Thy name."

I can see the satirical, incredulous smile of the end of century philosopher, with his satirical dogma about the dead-and-goneness of emotional fervour, of rugged piety. He denies their existence, he refuses to admit their possibility. In the midst of our present-day, lackadaisical, sham artisticism, the end of century cynic may find groundwork for his theory, but I bring before the reader's eye one of the simple-minded, simple-hearted pioneers of the Western prairies. Not all cut-throats these, not all rioting and debauched border

ruffians, cheating the red man and assassinating him afterwards as an occupation, and murdering one another for the spoil as a pastime, but often, very often aye, humbly pious and sterlingly honest, if rough, advance guards of civilization, among whom Daniel Kershaw upon his knees, with his hands raised towards his God in grateful praise for the hairbreadth escape of his child, would have elicited no surprise, and would have met with no derision. The picture is drawn from life. In the wild days of fifty-three and fifty-four, in the mighty Kansas Rockies, I knew several such men.

Good fortune would have it that two surgeons were travelling on the fated train, and had escaped uninjured. Their ready resource and skilled help saved life upon life among the unfortunate passengers, more than thirty of whom lay mangled and maimed on the wet grassy slope that faced the scene of the disaster.

No human habitation was in sight, no

friendly light gleamed anywhere near by, but messengers had been sent back to the depot in the rear, and the telegraph was in motion calling for aid from the nearest town. There were plenty of ready volunteers to speed on errands of mercy, but in spite of all eager and willing help, the grey, ohill dawn had already chased night, and the first golden streaks were gleaming red on the low eastern horizon, when an engine, conveying a rescue party, steamed to the further end of the broken trestle-work.

The work of removing the wounded to the vans that were to bear them towards less rough and ready surgical assistance, was necessarily slow and encompassed by no little difficulty.

Daniel Kershaw's injuries, though of no very dangerous nature, were yet sufficiently painful to cause him to breathe thankfully when he was laid upon the cool, white-sheeted bed in the little hotel of the next town. So thankful, so happy to bear his hurts ungrum-

blingly while his child had escaped scatheless, so contented to have her sit by his bedside with her slender arm beneath his head, and to assure himself again that really not a hair of her head had been injured. She had been shaken roughly and terribly, it was true ; but that precious foresight of his, in enwrapping her in a soft shield of rugs and furs, had doubtless prevented graver hurts.

When the doctors told him that he need have no fear about his speedy recovery, he replied, smilingly,—

“I guess I’ve had many a sassier whack than this thump in my day. Thar ain’t no bones broken, so I don’t kear a shuck o’ wheat. An’ my Angel’s hunky-dory, that’s as big a punkin to me as ever grewed.”

Early in the afternoon the young man who had done so much in rescuing them, came to inquire after the lord of Angelica City and his daughter.

“Show him in,” cried Kershaw eagerly.

"Toads and tarantullers, yew're not goin' to let him ago away without my shakin' hands with him. A man ain't got as many lives as a cat that he can have one chucked at him an' not be thankful to the man that throwed it."

To Daniel Kershaw, who had seen him on the previous night working, a black spectre amid the red flames, defying the flaring, raging demon that licked with scorching tongues about him, there seemed nothing extraordinary in the young man's appearance.

To Angel Kershaw he looked a pitiful sight, with his bandaged hands and arms, with his red and nearly raw, swollen face, from which eyebrows and beard had been singed, with his hair nearly gone, and his head wrapped in a red handkerchief, with his clothing which so evidently was not such as he was accustomed to wear. Yet with a woman's ready glance, she perceived in a second that those features would be handsome when they reassumed their natural composure. There was an open,

straightforward, good-tempered gleam about those eyes which even pain could not subdue.

"Come hyar, young man," cried the millionaire. "Me an' yew'll have to settle accounts, an' a pretty long bill it'll be as yew've got on the wrong side o' the ledger agin me. Look at him, Angel!" he added, turning to his daughter. "He ain't hensum to look at jest now, but he's a devil to go. I've bin in many a tight place in my life, an' thar was times as I'd ha' sworn I was goin' to be made meat of; but whenever I've got to look down the muzzle of a rifle agin, I want that chap to be by my side."

The young fellow stood silent and shame-faced at so much well-meant, rough eulogy.

The girl walked towards him, and stood mutely before him for a brief second's space, with her big, dark eyes beaming with fervent gratitude. Then she took both his hands, bandaged as they were, in her own soft, tiny fingers.



"Thank you, sir," she said, looking straight into his eyes. "Thank you with all my heart."

The touch and the words were electric; they sent the young man's blood tingling to his heart, and had his face not been one red scar, he might have blushed. Whether it were ordinary modesty, or whether it were the shock of a roused manhood, he stammered a few un-understandable words, and made a faltering movement towards the door.

"Yew ain't a-goin' away like that," cried Kershaw, arresting him by a motion of the hand, "an' my not knowin' more about yew than if yew was a Rapahoe or a Greaser. Not for me, not much yew ain't. Come now, sit down thar, let's hear more about yew. I am some, yew know, an' maybe I can be of service to yew, as yew was to me an' my Angel. What's yewr name, an' what's yewr business, an' whar are yew goin' to? I count I want to know all that, an' a pile more after that."

The young man had picked up the felt hat he had, on entering the room, placed on a chair, and stood twisting and twirling it bashfully and confusedly.

"It's very good of you, sir, to be so kind and so praiseful," he said with halting voice. "I don't know that I deserve it more than any of the others. My name, sir, since you are so good as to wish to know it, is Hubert Underwood. My business—well, I was going to New York to find some."

"We're a-gettin' on like a mule with a hornet fly on his back," exclaimed Kershaw. "So yew're goin' to New York to find some business. Yew can read an' write, I reckon?"

Underwood's face expanded in a smile.

"I can read," he answered, "but about writing I hardly know. Some people say I can, and some say I can't. I'm a journalist."

"A journalist?" echoed the millionaire. "Then yew're goin' to New York to boss a newspaper o' yewr own. Yew let me warn

yew, young man. I've knowed three young fellows that started papers. Harry Forsyth was one. He owned the *Kansas Golden Eagle*. He went back to Milwaukee with a broken rib, an' an eye gouged out, an' a lump bit out of his ear as big as half a dollar. Then thar was Joe McCall. He started the *Mountain City Trumpet*. He's alive, but he's got three bullet holes through him, an' he's bin tryin' to sell his paper this two year past, an' nobody won't buy it for as much as a copper cent. Thar's a lot o' shootin' got through in Mountain City, an' the *Trumpet* office ain't a paradise o' rest an' quiet. Then thar wos Bob Lenore. He said unkind things about young Dick Brewster in the *Herald of Freedom*—about Dick bein' an ugly, pisonous toad, an' a thief stealin' the city funds, an' that riled Dick, yew see, an' Bob an' he fit it out with pistols an' knives in Randy O'Hara's bar, an' when it wos all over thar wosn't enough left o' the pair to make one decent-sized,

ordinarily useful man, let alone tew. Dick hobbles around town on crutches, an' Bob wears a silver plate over the spot whar his nose used to be, an' he writes with his left hand."

"I have neither the inclination nor the means of founding a journal of my own," said Underwood. "I am simply going to New York to seek employment on one of the great dailies. I have been told that my chances are very fair, and I have some very good introductions from the editor of the paper I've just left."

Kershaw scratched his head.

"Are yew in a rampin' hurry to go to New York?" he asked.

"Not particularly, sir," answered the young journalist; "but why?"

"Cos, yew see, my Angel an' myself, we've got to stay heear at least another day, an' I've bin thinkin' as I'd like yew to travel to New York in the same train with us. When cars

are smashin', an' trains gettin' on fire, it's an almighty comfort to have a man like yew knockin' around. An' I reckon I ain't quite made up my mind yet what I've got to do about gettin' quits with yew over this job."

"Do stay and travel to New York with us," pleaded the girl. "I should be so pleased if you were to stay."

The young man looked up, and their eyes met.

"Thank you, miss ; thank you, sir," he said.  
"I guess I'll stay."

## CHAPTER III.

*"WOULD THAT BE WRONG, DADDIE  
DEAR?"*

THE amber evening sunlight danced upon the hundred panes of the handsome conservatory of a majestic, brown stone mansion on Fifth Avenue, New York City. It darted and flashed in a myriad sparkling atoms between the graceful fanlike branches of a small forest of palms, it gleamed yellow upon the darkly resplendent foliage of the camellia trees, and the delicately pale green lacework of the maidenhair ferns turned a mellow gold beneath its kiss. Its fairy touch bronzed the stately chrysanthemums with a richer and a deeper brown, it bathed evergreen and aloë and cactus in a flood of rippling sheen, and ran in dozens of warm, ruddy flecks and streaks upon the marble mosaic floor.

In one corner, where the drawn blinds and the overhanging foliage of the climbing stephanotis and of the stately fan palms afforded a welcome shade, Angel Kershaw swung herself to and fro in a high, round-backed, old-fashioned rocking-chair. On her right, Diana, the huntress, drew an arrow from a marble quiver; on her left, Juno scowled in white stony majesty at a mythical, invisible Paris.

Miss Kershaw was engaged in the unprofitable occupation of sighing. To sigh implies fear of failure or delay in the realization of a wish. It implies that some little house of cards, fancifully and daintily constructed, is in danger of being rudely blown down. It implies that some bright picture of hope has been called from dreamland, and found but a pleasurable dream.

Now it would seem strange, to start with, that a young lady so favoured by kindly nature and by a kindlier fortune, as Angelica Kershaw doubtlessly was above her sisters, should have

aught to sigh for at all. She was young, good looking, the admired of all men, the envied of all women. Did she wish for anything short of the moon, her father was rich enough to buy it for her; and Daniel Kershaw would have spent the last dollar of his vast fortune to gratify his darling Angel's slightest whim.

With all this, Miss Kershaw was a young lady of unusually small wants and desires. Her fare was of the most frugal. Her gown, shaped of pearl blue softly clinging woollen material, was a pattern of homely neatness and simplicity. Jewels she wore not. Fine servants she would not employ. Her father had engaged two maids for her—a young Irish girl, and a vivacious and experienced Frenchwoman. The Parisian expert was enjoying a holiday, and the duties of the young daughter of Erin were in nowise onerous. How was it then that a young lady who wanted so little, and could easily obtain so much, had aught to sigh for? For an explanation, the sealed,



mysterious shrine, yclept the female heart, will have to be unlocked and its blushing secrets laid bare.

Angelica Kershaw was in love, and did not know it. Angelica Kershaw was in love, and the delightfully strange sensation which slowly, and softly, and insinuatingly wrapped itself round her heart was as yet an enigma to her maiden mind. Angelica Kershaw was in love, and did not know what it meant to be in love. Had any one, more experienced than she in the trysts of the heart, told her that she was in love, she would have shaken her pretty, puzzled head in a happy wonderment. Her eyes might have glistened a little more brightly, and a warm soft satisfaction might have glowed rosily on her cheeks, but her delightful doubt would not have been so easily dashed aside.

Angelica Kershaw wanted something. She wanted the man she loved, and she did not know why she wanted him.

When they spoke of him, when they praised

him, when they said that he was brave, handsome, and clever, and built in the mould in which men of mark are fashioned, when her father read Underwood's articles aloud at the breakfast table with straightforward outspoken eulogy, and said approvingly, "Thar's a man for yew, Angel. If I had a son, such a man I'd like him to be——," when at the theatre, or the concert room, which they now and then frequented together, she could see men look at him and women point him out to one another, and she felt instinctively they were saying nice things about him—she was as delighted, as happy, as self-satisfied, as if all this had passed in her own personal favour.

She liked him. That she knew. She liked to be in his society. That she knew also. And she was so rarely in his society she thought, much too rarely to please her.

He had not accepted a copper coin of the reward the millionaire had offered him. He had even declined all favours of influence, of

introduction, of protection. His former employer had given him a letter to an old friend, the city editor of one of the great daily journals of Manhattan City, and Underwood had found immediate and, for his small wants, remunerative work as an outside reporter. Therefore both she and her father were still deeply in the young man's debt, and how could she hope to repay him, if she did not think well of him? To admire him, to be pleased by being near him, was a small reward for having saved her father and herself from the most awful of deaths.

And then he was so different from the men among whom she had grown up. His manner was different. His language was different, and when he addressed her, so tinged with a tenderness, which, whether it were respect or a kind of shy admiration for her, she knew not nor cared to question. Out on the prairies, or among the foothills of the Rockies, she had known men good and bad, but they were nearly

all unhewn, unpolished blocks of rough manhood, and though her seasoned ear was accustomed to their picturesque phraseology, and even remained unshocked by an occasional outburst of ultra forcible description or admonition, she had found sweet pleasure in the company of Milton, of Longfellow, of Whittier, of Tennyson, and in their fair company she had learned the mysteries of thought and expression, which the giants of English literature have revealed for the benefit of the Anglo-Saxon race.

She had seen very little of Hubert Underwood after their first arrival in New York. Daniel Kershaw had invited him to call, and she had added such maidenly persuasion as, at the moment, in her firstborn gratitude, she dared venture upon. He had called, but though he was received with open arms, so to say, by father and daughter, he had never dropped the calm reserve which had shrouded him from the beginning of their introduction.

He was pleasant and sprightly nevertheless, and so unpretentiously and unaffectedly demonstrative in his humble admiration for her—of such reverence as a loyal soldier might show for his queen—that she felt that in his society something was granted to her, a pleasurable sensation, a novel excitement, which other men,—the best and most admirable of them, her father even—could not call forth.

He came again, and how few and far between seemed to her his visits, and how soon past and over. Her father often rented boxes for her at Wallack's, at the Academy, at other theatres, and these occasions proved happy pretences for invitations to Underwood to come and join them. He was quite a treasure house of dramatic knowledge. Sheridan was an intimate acquaintance, and Shakespeare a friend who had no secrets, and half of whose pages Underwood knew by heart. He was a marvel altogether, that straight, manly, handsome,

young fellow, to whom she owed so much and who would accept nothing at her hands.

Miss Angelica Kershaw was sighing because she was impatient and in doubt. Her father was at that very moment closeted with Hubert Underwood, and an unconscionably long time had already passed without the upshot of their interview becoming known to her. She had formulated as pretty, as ingenious, and as deeply laid a scheme for enforcing a dutiful submission to her desires from the apparently shy young journalist as was ever invented, weighed, and brought to perfection by female ready resource. The most blushing and naïve of maidens can, if she sets her little wits to work, spin in her ingenuousness quite as finely woven, as delicate, and as silken strong a web wherein to ensnare and capture the poor, blind male fly, as any of her more experienced, more brilliant, and more dashing sisters, and Angel Kershaw's plan might fitly be included in such a category.

To begin with, Daniel Kershaw had to be a willing and active aider and abettor. That was not difficult. Miss Angel had only to wish for aught to be done and the old man was happy to do it. Hubert Underwood was to be enticed, persuaded, by hook or crook cajoled to become a more frequent visitor at the Kershaw mansion, and Miss Angel's little scheme was as pretty and as neat as if a clever lawyer had framed it.

Daniel Kershaw was to write a book. How he was to write a book, except in that peculiar, rounded, pictorial frontier dialect of his, was a mystery the solution of which Miss Angelica had undertaken. Daniel Kershaw was to write a book about Colorado, its origin, its resources, its population, and its future (Angelica City, of course, not being forgotten). He was to furnish facts, figures, prognostications, descriptions, geography, geology, border botany, incidents and anecdotes, but Hubert Underwood was to translate them into plain scholastic English.

He was to be credited with his due share of the work. The book was to be called, "Daniel Kershaw's Notes about Colorado, etc., edited by Hubert Underwood," and he was to be paid for his labour at the rate of so many dollars per working hour, and to receive half the profits, if any, realised by the sale of the book. Now as the work had to be done in Kershaw's house, Miss Angelica not only secured the daily near presence of the man whose company she desired, but—sly, wily little minx, her homely border education notwithstanding—she enjoyed the humorous prospect of paying him so much per hour for the pleasure his society was to give her.

All this was very nice, and fine, and pretty, and enjoyable, and delightfully exciting, if Underwood became a consenting party. But then there was the dreadful possibility of his refusal, and considering how long he seemed to be in making up his mind, how was she to know? Perhaps he might refuse, after all.



Therefore Miss Angelica was sighing. Therefore she was impatiently rocking herself to and fro, every now and anon stopping to listen for a footfall on the carpeted stair. It was therefore that she unconsciously plucked leaf after leaf and bloom after bloom from the plants around her, until quite a carpet of foliage lay strewn at her feet on the marble floor.

The closing of a door on the floor above, and the sound of her father's voice on the landing, warned her that, whatever Underwood's decision might be, it was arrived at. She had barely sufficient control over herself to remain seated where she was, and to exhibit a nonchalant exterior, as Daniel Kershaw and the young man of letters appeared at the stained glass conservatory door.

A glance at the old man's face satisfied her that her object was gained.

"I'm to have my book," exclaimed Kershaw cheerily, "and Mr. Underwood's to

write it. That's writ firm. I suppose yew're glad, ain't yew?"

"I shall always be pleased to see Mr. Underwood with you, daddie," replied the young lady, as quietly and stolidly as if her little heart were not thumping at that very moment, in a delightful revelry.

"Mr. Underwood is to come every mornin' at ten, an' we're to work till one," continued the founder of Angelica City. That's a bargain, ain't it?"

"That is quite understood, Mr. Kershaw," replied the young man.

"How nice!" chimed in Miss Kershaw, in spite of herself. "Then Mr. Underwood can stay to lunch every day."

Underwood looked from the daughter to the father in a questioning indecision.

"I will, with pleasure," he said at last, "if Miss Kershaw wishes it."

"I do wish it, Mr. Underwood," she exclaimed. "You will have to earn the value

of your meals. You're my walking encyclopædia, you know. I learn more from you in an hour than Miss Peveril and Professor Baxter succeed in teaching me in a month."

"I will endeavour to be instructive," retorted the young man with an enigmatical smile, the meaning of which she vainly endeavoured to fathom. Then with an even more ceremonious courtesy than usual, he bowed, shook hands, and took his leave. For all the world it seemed as if he had done a rash act and had half repented himself of his rashness.

When her father returned from having accompanied his visitor to the door, Miss Angel rose, and meeting him, threw her arms around his neck, and laid her head upon his stalwart breast.

"Is it very wrong in me, daddie," she breathed, "to be pleased when Mr. Underwood is here?"

"Not at all, my dear, not at all," he replied, stroking her silken tresses, and patting

her cheek. "What's bit yew to get that idea into your little noddle?"

"Was it wrong," she continued, as if unconscious of her father's reply, "to have asked Mr. Underwood to lunch with us after his work every day?"

"Wrong? Not a bit," exclaimed the pioneer, not in the least fathoming his daughter's meaning. "One more or less at luncheon don't make a bit o' difference. An' if it did, I guess we can afford it, an' a dozen of 'em, an' two dozen of 'em, if so be as it pleases yew."

"I did not mean that, daddie," whispered the sly one, still nestling close to him. "Won't people think me forward, and won't they say things about—about——?"

"I'd like to see the man that would open his mouth in as much as a breath agen yew, my Angel. He'd laugh at the other end of it afore I'd ha'd done with him. By the holy Moses, he would," he added, drawing himself

up, as if eager for the fray in the cause of his child.

"It is not the men who may say spiteful things," she continued. "What about the women? You can't fight them, you know."

"Let them say what they like, an' be sugared, my darling," he replied. "Yew're doin' nothin' that's wrong. Yewr own true little heart would warn yew afore yew did. An' that young fellow is as straight as a die, I'll go bail for him any day."

She nestled yet closer to the broad, fatherly bosom, and looked up into his eyes with a tender and timid inquiry. She took his big right hand in her own two, and patted and stroked it persuasively.

"If I liked Mr. Underwood," she questioned faintly, "would that be wrong, daddie dear?"

The little fingers wandered tremblingly over the old man's open palm. The big dark eyes

were drooped, while a blush, ever so pale and rosy, mantled on those pretty cheeks.

"Oh, that's it, yew sly puss," exclaimed Kershaw. "Is it? Waal, if it is, I guess it is, an' that's all."

He stooped and kissed her on the forehead.

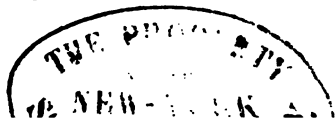
"Yew like him," he said softly, fondling her all the while. "That young fellow's good grit, a true man, a white man, I reckon. It cayn't be wrong in a maid to like a man like that. An' whar is thar on the wide, wide earth a gell that's more fit to be a good man's mate than my Angel?"

He stopped on a sudden.

"But yew'd leave me," he cried, as if affrighted—"an' I'd be alone in the world."

His face assumed such an expression of blank despair that she pressed her arms tightly around him and kissed him consolingly.

"Never, daddie darling," she cried fervently, "never, never while I am alive. No



man shall separate us. How could I leave you, the dearest, darlingest daddie in the world ?”

He clutched her little fingers, not roughly, but thankfully.

“ Yew promise that, Angel ?” he asked.

“ I promise it,” she answered. “ Now and for ever, for once and for all.”

“ Thank yew, dearie,” he exclaimed. “ Now yew can like young Underwood as much as ever yew want to.”

## CHAPTER IV.

### *LOVE, A CRIME.*

LUNCHEON was over, and the chief of the house of Kershaw was sleeping peacefully in his big chair at the head of the table. On one side of the broad, white damask-covered mahogany Mr. Hubert Underwood sat dreamily, apparently examining the figures on the tablecloth as if he were endeavouring to find therein the solution of some problem, whilst he drummed an unconscious rataplan on the table with his knife. On the other side, with a wistful and half-tearful face growing momentarily more anxious, Miss Angelica Kershaw was engaged in mechanically pouring water from one glass to another and back again, an occupation which was inter-



rupted every now and then by furtive inquiring glances at the young journalist.

Miss Kershaw at last pushed the glasses away from her, and called,—

“Mr. Underwood.”

He was in cloudland and did not hear her. The rataplan was growing even more tumultuous.

“Mr. Underwood,” she repeated softly.

The sound had its magic; for the young man, rousing himself from his reverie, looked up and smiled—one might have called it sadly.

“I beg your pardon, Miss Kershaw,” he said, “I hope you didn’t think me rude. I was thinking.”

“I was thinking also, Mr. Underwood,” she retorted in a low voice, “and I didn’t like what I was thinking about.”

He had shaken himself together, and his face brightened into a smile.

“I am very sorry to hear that, Miss Ker-

shaw," he said. "What were you thinking about?"

"I was thinking—I was thinking," she rejoined hesitatingly, "that I shall miss you very much when you're in Europe. I hate Europe—there!"

He looked at her for a brief instant, and his eyes glowed with a lustre she had never before noticed. He opened his lips twice or thrice, but arrested himself, as if some thought, more daring than his loyalty approved of, were surging in his heart, and he were afraid to give it expression. He was evidently endeavouring to find a phrase, a something, a nothing, in which modestly to veil a secret that was impatient to wing from his tongue.

"I can assure you," he said at last, making a brave effort to be nearly jocular, "that that ancient and venerable continent does not deserve your opprobrium. Europe is as innocent as a new-born babe—I am the criminal, if there is one. I am glad though, real glad,"

he continued in a less bantering, more quiet and more tender tone, "to hear you say that you have found pleasure in my society. I am downright, heartily glad. It would be mean and unmanly in me to deny it."

It was her turn now to hesitate for a suitable way of expressing her thoughts. Her little forefinger ran nervously over the tablecloth, and drew invisible diagrams upon it.

"But if that is so," she inquired with drooped eyes, and a face to which a hot blush was rising in spite of her, "why do you go to Europe?"

He thanked his stars that she was not looking at him, that her great black glowing eyes were not playing havoc with his heart.

A sigh, long drawn, escaped him.

"That is an answer of a kind, and yet no answer," she continued, still busy with her imaginary diagrams. "Is it really necessary that you should go to Europe?"

This form of the question perplexed him less.

"It *is* necessary, Miss Kershaw," he answered, devouring her with his glances, whilst she still looked away from him. "The position I am offered as European correspondent is one which dozens of men older, more experienced, and better known than myself would be eager to accept. I have still a name to make for myself, Miss Kershaw," he added pleadingly. "My pen is all my fortune, and I cannot afford to let such a splendid chance go by."

"Afford?" she echoed; "afford? That horrible money which is the root of all evil in this world. I wish there were none."

"It is very easy for *you* to wish that," he replied with a half-hearted little laugh. "A man like myself cannot so well afford to despise King Mammon. It makes a lot of difference to one's comfort and one's happiness if the wolf is not scratching at the door. I have been poor enough, believe me, to know what want means."

"But surely you can earn quite as much in

New York," she retorted nearly desperately. "There are as many chances for a brilliant writer in the States as in Europe—more, I should say, for one who knows American needs and customs. Do you mean to tell me that it is imperative for your success that you should go to London or to Paris?"

She looked up, and her eyes, meeting his, rested on them with such sweet persuasion that he felt his strength of purpose trickling from him.

"You are concealing something, Mr. Underwood," she breathed. "Be frank with me. Why are you going away?"

He tried hard to be silent; but those gleaming looks of her fired him, and caution was scattered like chaff before a whirlwind. He felt himself growing red and white by turns, as the hot thoughts rushed from his brain, and he vainly endeavoured by cold unconcern to restrain them.

"Do you really wish to know why I am

going away?" he replied with an expression so penitent that he might have been a poor confessing sinner in cathedral chapel, with an expression so sadly repentant, as if forgiveness for his crime might be prayed, but not hoped for. "I am going away because, I believe, you would be pleased if I were to stay."

The words were no sooner spoken than he would have given all he possessed, and all he was ever likely to possess, to have them unsaid. But it was too late. No human ingenuity has yet invented the means of recalling the sped bolt, the hastily spoken word.

She, maiden like, uncertain even of her own heart's promptings, inexperienced in the veiled phraseology of passion, did not grasp the words in the full meaning they would have conveyed to others, and which they were intended to convey. Do not think, dear reader, that this simple Western girl was playing a part, or endeavouring to play a part. She so little understood the fulness of her own heart's

delicious din, that had any one told her that she was in love with Hubert Underwood she would have naïvely shaken her head, have whispered "Perhaps," and have been thrice happy over the discovery.

"You want to go away," she exclaimed surprisedly, "because it would please *me* if you were to stay!"

He was fast getting desperate. Playing with fire is, after all, a game one cannot easily get through without a scorching. Did she really not understand him, he thought, or was it mere woman's pretty deceit?

"I am going away, Miss Kershaw," he said slowly, resolutely, and nearly fiercely—with a slight pause between each word—"because I dare not stay."

"Dare—not—stay?" she repeated, looking at him in wonderment.

He had gone too far to retreat. He flung all reserve to the winds, and the torrent he had so long restrained rushed from his lips.

Better that she should know. It would ease his feverish mind, and as he was going away, the knowledge could not harm her.

"I dare not stay," he cried fervently, "because I dare not trust myself—because I am afraid of myself—because I am afraid of proving unloyal to that good old man who sleeps there, and who, trusting to my honour, leaves you with me, and sleeps soundly. I am going away because I love you, and because loving you, in me, is a crime."

She had risen slowly and stately like a queen, like a proud and happy queen. By unburdening himself of his secret he had unlocked the shrine that held her own. By telling her that he loved her, he had disclosed to her that she loved *him*. The thoughtless ununderstanding girl was gone, and a blushing, blossoming woman stood there in her stead.

"A crime?" she breathed faintly. "A crime? Why?"

The trial was too severe for him.



"I can't tell you," he answered. "I can't tell you."

Then, as if panting to escape from some hidden danger, he rose and rapidly moved to the door.

"Think not of what I said just now, Miss Kershaw," he exclaimed, with his hand already upon the handle of the lock. "I pray you forgive me. I did not know what I was saying."

She made a step to retain him, but he was gone.

"A crime?" she whispered, as she amazedly sank back in her chair. "A crime? Why is it a crime?"

She sat there puzzled, pondering. To her it seemed so right, so according to the fit order of things, so holy, so pregnant of happiness to both, that Hubert Underwood should love her. It would have been a disaster if he had not loved her, so it appeared to her mind.

He had run away from her frightened—

afraid of himself, he had called it. In what wise was he afraid of himself, why was he afraid of himself?

He had designated his love for her as something disloyal, shameful. How could that be? What was the meaning of it all?

She waited patiently until her father moved in his chair, and then stole behind him, and bent over him, and drew a soft arm round his neck. He looked up at her, smiling happily as he always did when she was near him.

"Daddie dear," she whispered, running her slender fingers through his long white hair, and looking away from him half-absent-mindedly, while her little foot tapped the carpet, "you are good, and you are wise, and you always do what is right, and—and——"

The preamble was couched in so nearly a rhetorical a form, and yet so fragmentary, that a request either for charity or for clemency appeared to loom behind the preliminary veil. He was ready to grant either or both.

“Waal,” he said, “I guess it’s an old nigger woman that’s got ony one leg an’ wants fifty dollars to set her up to do washin’? Or is it a Dutch greenhorn with a cock-eye jest come out of hospital as wants money to peddle oranges? Or is it Bridget that’s dropped my big china pipe and smashed it, or——?”

She placed her tiny hands over his mouth and arrested his flow of humour.

“It’s nothing of the kind, you dear, silly old daddie,” she said. “It is nothing to make fun of at all. It is something very, very serious.”

Her face bore so demure an expression at that time as to appear to him nearly comical.

“Oh!” he exclaimed, “who’s bin an’ let the kickin’ mule loose now, and upset the molasses barrel? Is the beaver’s tail in the fire, an’ whose tail is it?”

“You must really not make fun of it, daddie,” she breathed mournfully. “I am so anxious, and I don’t know what to think of it——”

Her fingers were still running slowly and coaxingly through his hair. He released himself gently, and tried to look into her averted face.

"Think of what?" he asked tenderly, concernedly.

"He went away quite on a sudden," she continued, as if she had not heard her father's question, "and he spoke so strangely."

"Who spoke strangely?" the old man demanded, well accustomed to Miss Angel's roundabout mode of procedure.

"Why Mr. Underwood, to be sure." Her heart was so full at that moment that she could not conceive how there could be another man in the world for her to speak about.

"Mr. Underwood," Daniel Kershaw echoed. "What's he bin doin'? Yew ain't cryin', are yew? What's he bin sayin', my Angel? Dern his skin, I'll break his head if he's bin makin' you cry."

"No, daddie dear," she replied, drawing her

arm more tightly around him and nestling closer to him until her downy cheek rested against his. "Mr. Underwood is the best, the truest man alive. After you, dear, of course. And he's going away."

"He's goin' to Yewrup to earn money, an' to make a name," rejoined Kershaw. "It's right an' proper. I like the boy's spirit."

"He is not going to Europe to make money, daddie dear," she whined. "He could make money in New York."

"I guess that's woman's fall-lolls, that is," he answered. "If he ain't goin' away to make money, why is he goin' away?"

"He says he is going away because he's afraid to stay. He is going away because he thinks I'd like him to stay. He is going away because he loves me, and he says, daddie dear, —he says,—that it is a crime in him to love me."

The tears were flowing fast now, the soft fingers had ceased to stroke the old man's head, and were clasped as if in anguish.

He took her head between his hands and forced her to look into his eyes.

"My poor child!" he whispered, "my poor Angel! Thar ain't nothin' to cry about. Thar ain't nothin' broken—nothin' that cayn't be mended. I guess I know what he means. Yew've got heaps o' money an' he ain't got none, an' he knows that yew like him, an' he's too straight an' too true to let yew like him."

"But I've money enough for both of us," she exclaimed despairingly. "Oh, daddie dear, I'll die if he goes away."

"That's all soft nonsense, my child," he rejoined. "Yew ain't a-goin' to die, an' he ain't goin' away if I can help it. I ain't goin' to see my Angel spoilin' her pretty eyes an' makin' her face red by cryin'. Thar now, run away, an' I'll speak to Mr. Underwood the fust thing to-morrow mornin'."

He had come at last, the man whom he dreaded so much, the man who claimed to

share his Angel's heart with him. Yet he was not jealous of him. He would have poured out his heart's blood for her like water, he would have uncomplainingly submitted to a thousand tortures for her sake,—why would he not bear this small pain, happy in her happiness? To brush a single salted tear from her lids, to call forth a flitting smile of content, to drown an escaping sigh in the fond murmur of his love, to smooth her path and bestrew it with the flowers of his solicitude, to make her every day a bright and rosy dream—what would he not have borne, what would he not have done for any of these? Devoutly he thanked his Maker that the man who was to rob him of part of his Angel's love was so worthy of her and it. If there was another man to occupy her dreaming thoughts, if other lips but his were to meet hers in holy kiss, it was well for his peace of mind that so white a man as Hubert Underwood was the favoured of fortune.

When Underwood opened the library door next morning, he found the old pioneer already seated at the big writing-table. After the usual morning greeting the young man immediately set to work to arrange the notes that had been left from the previous sitting. To his astonishment he saw Daniel Kershaw rise, walk to the bureau, and produce a box of cigars.

"Have a smoke, Mr. Underwood," said the old man, pushing the box towards him and lighting one himself.

"Thank you, I will," replied Underwood. "I generally smoke over my work at home, but here—are you quite sure?—Miss Kershaw——?"

"Oh, Ange! don't come hyar once in a blue moon," retorted the old man laughingly, "an' if she did, I guess she'd stomach it. She's growed powder dry and smoke dry afore this. Ony if yew prefer chewin', don't mind sayin' it, young man. I've got some slabs o' black



Tennessee as would take the curl out of a nigger's hair."

"Thank you, Mr. Kershaw," answered Underwood, "but I don't chew. This is good enough for me."

With that he spread his papers on the table before him, and opened the big glass, brass-covered inkstand.

"Are yew really jumpin' to work this mornin'?" demanded Kershaw, blowing great puffs of grey smoke and lolling lazily in his big arm-chair.

"I am ready for work as usual, Mr. Kershaw," replied the young journalist—"neither more nor less."

"If yew ain't almighty pertickler to do a lot o' writin' this mornin', I'd like to have a talk with yew about somethin' else," drawled Kershaw. "About somethin' as consarns me very much," he added with a deliberate emphasis.

Underwood put down his pen. He was evidently prepared for something of the kind.

"Well!" he exclaimed.

"How much are yew goin' to get for goin' to Yewrup?" asked the millionaire abruptly.

"Sixty dollars a week and my expenses," was the matter-of-fact reply.

"I've bin a-thinkin'," said Mr. Kershaw, "that I cayn't get on without somebody to do my writin', an' clerks ain't no use to me. I want a man as has got brains about me, an' I've bin turnin' it over in my mind longways, an' sideways, an' all ways, an' I've knocked the bottom out of the keg at last. I've bin sayin' to myself these many days past, 'Daniel Kershaw, Mr. Hubert Underwood is the man for yew, an' the only man,' an' I'd be down-right obliged, an' thankful to yew, if yew was to consent to be my secretary, an' I'd be glad to pay yew a hundred dollars a week, if somaybe as yew'd be content to take it."

He had spoken humbly, pleadingly, and persuasively. Had their positions been re-

versed, had Kershaw been the poor young writer, and Underwood the lord of many acres, his speech could not have trepidated with more anxiety about the result.

"I am sorry, very sorry," replied the young man. "You are kind—too kind—but I cannot accept your offer."

"Oh, I guess it ain't temptin' enough," retorted the old man bitterly. "Waal, I'll sugar it. We'll say a hundred an' fifty dollars a week."

"I do not know how to thank you for your kind appreciation," answered Underwood with a red blush on his cheeks. "Your offer is a brilliant one, and to many a poor struggling young fellow like myself it would appear the realization of a beautiful dream ; but I have said it, Mr. Kershaw, and I repeat it—I cannot accept your offer."

The old frontiersman pushed his chair closer. and looked him straight in the face.

"I guess it ain't no use of yew or me a-

dancin' around the mulberry tree," he said; "nor to burn a lot o' powder for nothin'. We'll fix a new flint, an' prime her, and let her rip. My Angel's told me all about what yew said to her yesterday, an' I know what the sign is, an' whar it's a-comin' from. Now my Angel is the best, an' the sweetest, an' the hensomest gell in the world, an' she's got money enough to buy this blamed street, an' the next street, an' the street after that, if she'd want to. An' she says that she's fond o' yew, an' that yew're fond o' her, an' that she don't want yew to go to Yewrup. An' I'm glad she is fond o' yew, an' *I* don't want yew to go to Yewrup."

Underwood hid his face in a silent, blushing confusion.

"Would it were possible," he breathed. "Would to God it were!"

"What's that?" questioned Kershaw nearly excitedly. "What's that yew're sayin'?"

"I would be so happy," the young man

whispered. "I would be so very happy, but I dare not. I am not worthy of her."

"What do yew mean?" repeated Kershaw.

"I mean what I say. I am unworthy of her."

"Come now, let's see why the baar's a-growlin'," exclaimed the old man sternly. "It ain't nò use tryin' to catch beaver without a trap. Which way does *yewr* stick float? I hope yew won't mind my puttin' questions. Any other woman about?"

"No, there is no other woman."

"Ever bin in jail?"

"No, I have never been in jail."

"Never did no hoss thievin'?"

"Never."

"Never got flogged for sayin' what wasn't true about a man?"

"Never."

"Never got kicked for foolin' round a man's wife?"

"Never."

"Never spent money what didn't belong to yew?"

"Never."

"Never cheated nobody, be he white man, nigger, or Injun?"

"Never."

"Never jumped no claims?"

"Never."

"Never killed nor hurt nobody 'scept in fair fight?"

"Not even in fair fight."

Kershaw scratched his head in a confused wonderment. The catechism had been extensive, but evidently it had not included the particular crime the young man was guilty of.

"Waal," he said, "I reckon I don't know what yew've bin up to." A bright idea struck him. "I know what yew've bin doin'," he exclaimed. "Yew've bin smugglin'."

"I never smuggled anything," was the dogged answer. "And I've never done any-

thing that either I or anybody else need be ashamed of."

"That beats skunk huntin', that does," cried Kershaw. "Yew didn't thieve, an' yew didn't fool round a man's wife, an' yew never got flogged, an' yew never got kicked, an' yew've never bin in jail, an' yew've never done nothin' as yew're ashamed of; then what, in the seven blazes, have yew bin an' done as makes yew unworthy of my gell?"

The young man's eyes were fixed upon the ground and his face was burning.

"You have a right to know, I suppose," he whispered. "Your goodness and Miss Kershaw's goodness give you the right. I have a father."

Kershaw laughed aloud in spite of himself.

"Waal," he cried, "that ain't no sin, I reckon. It may be a sin in a man to have a son, but it cayn't be a sin in a lad to have a father. I guess all of us have had one, though some of us don't know theirs,"

"I wish to Heaven I did not know mine!  
I wish to Heaven I had *never* known him!"  
exclaimed Underwood fervently.

"That's a-gettin' to look hard," said Kershaw quietly. "Thar's a barb to that arrow, an' it's a-stickin' deep in the flesh. Is your father alive?"

"He is." This with a sigh of pain.

"Whar is yewr father now?" Kershaw asked.

The journalist looked at the rich man piteously. A short pause, whilst a desperate struggle was tumultuous in his breast, then the quiet words,—

"He is in jail."

The old man's face had grown white, and he looked about him in a staring dismay.

"Yewr father in jail," he whispered. "In jail? Some mistake, I reckon. Did somethin' he was very sorry for. Men do things, yew know, they often wish they hadn't done. Dick Rafferty, as good a man as ever breathed,



when he's sober, got drunk and killed his pardner, an' he's in the chain-gang now."

"My father is no such man," was the slow and terribly deliberate reply. "He has been in prison half his life. He has been a dozen times convicted of theft, of burglary, of murder. Now, Mr. Kershaw, ought I to go to Europe or not?"

## CHAPTER V.

### *THE SPECTRE OF THE PAST.*

THEY had been sitting there for fully a quarter of an hour, puffing silently at their cigars, the old man staring in front of him blankly, coldly, vacantly, the younger man moving uneasily on his chair, casting wistful glances at his companion, and drumming a silent march with his finger-tips on the table.

“Tell me all about yewrself,” said the pioneer on a sudden. “Let’s have a fair, square look at yewr devil, an’ see if he’s as black as yew’ve painted him. Tell us all about how yew’ve growed up, an’ whar yew’ve growed up, an’ how yew’ve bin gettin’ yewr livin’, an’ how yew’ve come to be what yew

are. I guess then I'll know what I've got to do."

The young man hesitated for a few moments undecidedly.

"It is perhaps better that you should know all," he said at last with a heavy-drawn sigh. "I have told you the worst. The rest of my history has no surprises—of the disagreeable kind at any rate.

"I can remember myself first of all," he continued, "a grimy, smudge-faced, half-ragged urchin, running about Front Street, St. Louis ; diving and dodging about the steamboats on the levee, and picking up pieces of wood, bits of iron, and all such rubbish as are generally found in similar neighbourhoods, and carrying them to my mother, who lived in a tumble-down shanty not far from the railway station. The stewards and the cooks of the steamers used to be very kind to me, and many a piece of pumpkin-pie, of meat, and of corncake I got from them. I remember well how, even at

that time, the boys of my own age used to shun me, and taunt me with my father being a thief or with my father being in prison. At that time I saw very little of him. Even when he was not in jail he was seldom at home, and when he was at home our little shanty was a very hell upon earth. He used to beat my mother unmercifully, and went so far as to bring other women into the house. As I grew to years of better comprehension, young as I was, I came to be heartily ashamed of him. A Baptist missionary had been talking to me on the levee and I had been going to the evening school, and there I had learned that it was wrong to steal; and I knew that it was wrong to steal when, one night, my father took me with him and another man on an expedition to break into a house. I could climb like a cat then, and they wanted me to get over a high wall and open a door for them.

“I had got heartily tired of being jeered at and gibed at for being the son of a thief, and

quite a horror against dishonesty had arisen in my young mind under the teachings of the good Baptist missionary. So I climbed that wall, but, when I got on the top, I shouted with all my might, and the people of the house were awakened and came out, and my father had to run away vowing vengeance against me.

“After that I dared not go home, but Mr. Casey, the kind Baptist missionary, sheltered me for a few days and nights, and at last he got me a place as scullery boy on the steamboat *Wisconsin*, running between St. Louis and Dubuque. All went very well with me for a while. From the post of scullery boy I rose to that of pantry boy, and then to that of cabin boy. The purser took a fancy to me and lent me books to read, and when winter came he got me a place on the *Yazoo City* steamer, running between Vicksburg and Yazoo City, and I passed another season there.

“My good fortune would have it that, on that

boat, I met the Hon. Levi Walker, member of Congress for Missouri, and editor of the *Kansas City Star*. He offered to make a journalist of me, and I was glad to consent. In his office I rose from one position to the other, and all would have been well if, one unlucky day, I had not, in the street, run across my father. He was unfortunately too well known in the place. He had been tarred and feathered there, he had been flogged there, he had been in the chain-gang, he had been within an ace of being hanged there. He immediately claimed from me the rights which his ties of affinity gave him, and I had to confess the horrible truth to Mr. Walker. I tried to buy my wretched father's departure, but the more money I gave him, the firmer became his resolution to hang on to me. The people in Kansas City were very good to me. They had had time to learn to know me, and they pitied me.

"Mr. Walker gave me an introduction to

several Cincinnati editors, and I left Kansas City, and with it my dreadful father. I found immediate and remunerative work in Cincinnati, and I stayed there several years. From Cincinnati I went to Chicago, and on my journey from Chicago to New York you met me. Now you know all about me. I do not think that I have forgotten anything of importance."

"An' ain't yew seen yewr father since then; ain't yew heard from him?" asked Kershaw.

"I know of his existence only through the newspapers," replied Underwood. "They periodically record his convictions. My mother died shortly after my leaving Cincinnati, under his brutal treatment, that I know also."

"Waal," exclaimed Kershaw, "if yew ain't heerd from him nor yet seed him, maybe as yew'll never hear nor see no more of him."

"That is not to be hoped for," sighed the young man. "I live in daily dread of run-

ning across him in the street, of his calling at my rooms, of his coming here. If the slightest chance is given him of blackmailing me or you, he will fasten on us like a léech, and it would be easier to get rid of a vampire than of him."

"I've had to deal with that kind o' man afore to-day," said the frontiersman quietly, "an' they nary once got the best o' me yet."

"Ah," replied the young man bitterly, "it is easy for you to say that. Not one of the scoundrels whom you have come across was your own father. One cannot mete out justice to the man to whom one owes one's life, and not be soiled by his guilt. The taint clings, one's clothing reeks with it, it poisons the food, it embitters the drink, it calls up hideous grinning ghosts to haunt your sleep. It turns your honest handiwork into rebuke, it makes good men's praise a stolen deceit, and all your life one long reproach. O God!" he cried in a sudden agony, "how can I be rid



of it? Shall I ever be rid of it? I have never felt it as I do at this moment."

The old man cast a scrutinising glance upon him, a long glance full of pity.

"Poor boy!" he muttered. "The sins of the fathers. Poor boy!"

Underwood jumped up on a sudden.

"You must let me go, Mr. Kershaw," he cried. "You really must not try to detain me. Don't think me a coward. I do not go to Europe to run away from him. I go to escape from myself. I love your daughter, and I have no right to love her. God knows I have struggled, and fought, and contended against myself. I have tried to be marble, and see the result. I am but human, after all. Pity me, by having no pity on me. There is no harm done yet. Let me go before it is too late."

In his heated excitement he walked up and down the room like some frightened, caged creature, trembling in every limb. He grasped

the decanter that was standing on the table, and pouring out two glasses of water, swallowed them greedily one after the other, as if thereby he were able to cool the fever of his emotion.

"Sit down thar," said the millionaire softly, pointing to an arm-chair, "an' let me bide this over. When they've bin cryin' sign, yew've got to stand to yewr rifles an' be ready. But that ain't no reason for runnin' away, an' leavin' all yewr peltry behind. Yew've got that thar father o' yewrn, an' yew cayn't get rid of him nohow, cos it ain't 'lowed to smother him. Yew've got to take kear that he don't harm yew, nor those that like yew, that's all. It's all well, an' fine, an' easy, for yew to run away an' go to Yewrup; but what am I to do with my Angel, who'll cry her eyes out when yew're gone, an' who'll pine, an' wither, an' die, perhaps, for she ain't over-strong,—an' she's an obstinate critter when she's set her heart on a thing. No, my boy,

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yew've got to be a man, an' yew've got to bear yewr load like a man, an' not sit down under it, an' yew've got to do it for the sake of the gell that loves yew, an' she's worth it, I can assure yew."

"But——" exclaimed Underwood.

"Thar ain't no but," interrupted the old pioneer. "On the straight road, the honest road, the broad road that lies afore yew, thar ain't no byeways, an' thar ain't no turnin's. Thar may be rocks an' boulders, an' big stones all along, but yew've got to sit on yewr hoss, an' jest to ride over 'em. It ain't no use a-sneakin' away as if yew wos the guilty one. Hold yewr head up straight, young man, cos yew've got the right to hold it up in spite of yewr father, an' if so be as anybody challenges yew, yew say, 'Go an' ask Dan'l Kershaw for my character,' an' I guess Dan'l Kershaw's purty well known from the Platte to the Canadian, an' from the Rockies to the Atlantic; an' if they come to

me an' say anything agin yew, they'll soon find out the truth."

"I don't merit this, Mr. Kershaw," said Underwood, in a voice broken by his emotion. "I wish I could feel myself more personally deserving of it. Believe me, your daughter's love, your own friendship, are priceless in my eyes. It is just because I value them so rarely that I tremble to stay."

"Come now," exclaimed Daniel Kershaw, "that's better. I guess that's heap better. Yew let me think this business over. But the thing yew've got to do is to go an' tell yewr people that yew ain't goin' to Yewrup, an' yew can start with me as my secretary as soon as yew like. An' mind yew, not a syllab of this to my Angel, not a word, on yewr honour, until I see what's got to be done."

Miss Angelica was sitting in the dining-room, waiting for the result of her father's interview with Hubert Underwood. A trifle more anxious perhaps than on the previous

day, and a shade paler,—the tiny fingers twitched a little more nervously, and wrung the gauzy cambric handkerchief in rapidly tremulous agitation. Once or twice her rocking-chair came very near overbalancing itself, so erratic were the young lady's impulsive movements, and so forgetful was she of her own safety amidst her heart's tumultuous doubting promptings.

She jumped up with a glad cry when she heard the door open upstairs, and Daniel Kershaw's heavy footsteps on the landing.

"Where is Mr. Underwood?" she inquired eagerly, when she saw that the old man was alone.

"He is gone out by the front door, my Angel," answered the pioneer, patting her head, "an' he wants yew to excuse him."

"Excuse him?" she repeated, in a dismayed wonderment. "Excuse him? Tell me, daddie dear," she burst out convulsively, "is he going away?"

"Thar now, dry yewr eyes," he replied soothingly, "he ain't a-goin' away, not a little bit he ain't. This won't do at all, yew know. I cayn't have my Angel a-cryin', an' a-losin' her roses. Mr. Underwood not only ain't a-goin' away, but he's goin' to be my secretary, an' yew'll be able to see him every day."

How those big lustrous eyes brightened, and those downy cheeks dimpled! She stood on tiptoe, and threw her arms around his neck, and kissed him for the happy news he had brought her, and a few minutes afterwards she had forgotten all about her little troubles and the sorrow they had brewed for her, and the dreadful anticipations that had affrighted her, over the imaginary woes and joys of the heroine of the latest novel.

Daniel Kershaw was sitting at the big bow window of the dining-room, looking out into the street. He was not an imaginative man, and had been accustomed to deal with hard

matter of fact in a hard matter-of-fact way all his life. Ready resource, prompt decision, and swift action had been and were his chief characteristics, yet the present emergency brought a strange indecision in its way. For the first time in his life the sturdy pioneer was puzzled, and he was angry with himself for being puzzled.

A conflict of thoughts and memories surged in his mind, and threatened to interfere with his habitual determination. He looked upon the street, and the little crowds of passers-by, listlessly, uninterestedly, when, on the opposite side of the road, he espied a man, who rather slunk than walked along, casting furtive glances about him from time to time.

He was an old man, a tall man, bent, with broad stooping shoulders. His gait was shifty, and his manner shrinking. Whilst looking in this direction, or in that, as if seeking somebody or something, he turned his eyes towards the window where Daniel Kershaw sat, and

thereby gave the latter an opportunity of seeing his face. It was not a pleasant face—thin, haggard, and gaunt, and of an ashen pale. A great scar ran across one cheek, and gave it a nearly villainous look. The eyes, bright and piercing, bespoke a devilry not yet extinct. The mouth was hard, with square set jowl, and yet it was a face which might have been handsome years and years ago, before manliness was stamped out of it, and ferocity and brutality had writ their mark there. His hair was sparse and white, and a small scrubby white beard fringed his cheeks. His clothing, though not absolutely in rags, was of the coarsest, and an unkempt, unshaven appearance added to the general repulsiveness.

As Daniel Kershaw's eyes rested on the man's face, an indistinct remembrance dashed upon him and gripped his mind.

"I've seed that man afore," he said to himself, and strove to obtain a better look.

The man had slunk on, however, and was



turning his back. A little farther down the Avenue he crossed the road, and was lost to sight.

"Whar have I seed that man afore?" Daniel Kershaw kept asking himself all that morning. "I'm sure I've seed that face afore."

Whatever work he was engaged upon, whether he were writing, or reading, or resting, or smoking, that pale, unshaven face thrust itself between him and his thoughts. It followed him when he went upstairs to his own room, and it was with him as he sat down to luncheon.

So preoccupied was he, and so moodily abstracted, that Angelica imagined him to be ailing, and was profuse in her questioning, and in her pretty solicitude.

After luncheon he sat himself down by the window again, and the picture of that face flashed across his mind, but not as he had seen it that morning. The white hair was nearly

dark, the face brown and robust, but even more scowling and more villainous than as he had last seen it.

“I’ve got it,” he cried. “I guess I’ve got it. I was sure I knowed it. It’s Mike Turner—Cheeseface Mike—Hellfire Joe’s pardner!”

## CHAPTER VI.

### *ON THE PROWL.*

SLEEP was a stranger to Daniel Kershaw's couch that night. He kept tossing and rolling from one uncomfortable position to the other, now too hot, then too cold, first determinedly closing his eyes and vowing he would neither see nor dream, then opening them wide and staring at the ceiling in the dim light of the shaded night-lamp. Gradually his unrest passed away, and although winged slumber came not to him, his pulsation became more even, and his mind less troublous in its activity.

"Thar wos ony eight men an' one woman, beside myself, that knowed it," he said to

himself, "an' now thar's Mike Turner, Hellfire Joe's pardner, as I'd forgotten. Thar was Little Hoss Harry—some thievin' Blackfeet wiped him out, raised his hair at Two Buttes Creek. Then thar was Rednail Jack—he's gone too. He died in the Staked Plain. An' Bill Clelland too—the Yellow Jack carried him off at Vera Cruz. Martin Brickhead went to Californy, an' got shot at 'Frisco. Bob Allen an' Pat Brannagan got killed in the war. Poor old Ruth has gone under these ten years. Thar's only two more alive: Butternut Sam—he's keepin' a ranche at Fort Seaton; an' Eli Watkins—he's made his pile, an' is loafin' about Palestine, an' Roosha, an' Switzerland, an' a lot more ungodly places. An' Eli an' Sam they're both staunch an' true, an' I'd trust 'em with my life any day. But Mike—he looks harder than ever; he looks as if he'd cut your throat for a dollar.

"I guess though," he continued, "he'll find me a tough card. I settled his pardner, an'

I'll settle him if he runs athwart me, *or* my Angel."

With the recital of the list of his quondam companions, and the recapitulation of the events pertaining to the career of each, his power of calm reasoning returned in all its former vigour. The problem of Hubert Underwood's troubles was perplexing enough in its way, and now that villainous face of Hellfire Joe's partner added its mite to the difficulty. Early morning came before the frontiersman could find rest in sleep, having discovered a plan which would enable him to do what was right, and avoid all trouble to his darling.

When Hubert Underwood came to work as usual the next morning, he found both Daniel Kershaw and Miss Angelica in the library.

"I'm a man as cayn't bear beatin' about the bush," said the millionaire, "an' when I've got to do a thing, I like to do it an' make no bones about it. I'm a-goin' to speak plainly to yew

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both—to yew, my Angel, an' to yew, young man. Come, sit down heear right by my side, both of yew."

Hubert seated himself in a hot trepidation. The old man spoke pleasantly. There was nothing to be feared ; nothing but his own heart.

"I guess yew're both very fond o' one another," continued Kershaw smilingly, "an' yew'd both die for one another. That's the way they put it in the story books as a general rule, isn't it? Waal, I've bin readin' stories, too—stories that's true an' stories that isn't, an' I've heerd it said, an' I guess I know, that many a time two young people take their oath that they love one another, an' believe it too, believe it hard ; but when they come to live with one another, they quarrel an' fight like cats an' dogs, an' it's mostly the woman's heart that's broken fust."

Miss Angel threw her arms round her father's neck, and placed her soft hand over his mouth.

"I shall not listen, you dear, silly, old daddie," she exclaimed brightly, "if you will say such awful things. I shouldn't have come if I had thought that we were about to listen to a sermon."

He disengaged himself gently.

"Ah, my Angel," he said softly, "it's a sermon as yew ought to listen to, an' keep firm in yewr mind, an' remember always. I don't intend to play euchre or brag with yewr young life an' happiness, an' I'll tek kear that yew shan't do it yewrself, if yew've got the right bower, an' the left bower, an' as many trumps as yew like, not even then."

She nestled closer to him anxiously.

"Tell me, don't keep me waiting, daddie dear," she breathed.

"It's a-comin', my darling," he replied, "slow an' sure. I've turned things over, an' slept over 'em, an' havin' slept over 'em, I've got things straight an' clear, an' I'll tell yew both what I'm goin' to do. Mr. Underwood

was goin' to Yewrup. Yewrup is a nice country, ain't it, Mr. Underwood?"

"It is very pleasant, I believe," answered the journalist. "Lot's of people go there for pleasure. *I* was going there on business."

"I guess as it's a country worth seein'," the pioneer went on, "an' it won't do no harm to my Angel nor to me to see it, an' I propose that my Angel an' myself we go to Yewrup, —to London, an' to Constantinople, an' to Jeeroosalem, an' to Paris, an' to Ireland, an' to a lot more places, an' that we stay thar a year or so, we'll say, an' that yew, Mr. Underwood, yew come with us as my guest an' as my secretary at the same time, cos I'll want somebody to do my writin' for me, yew know. An' so yew an' my Angel 'll be together every day, an' yew'll git to know one another better than yew do now, an' each other's good points, an' each other's faults, an' each other's temper, an' if so be as at the end of the year yew're as fond o' one another as yew are now, an' as



ready to take one another for good or for ill, for good times or bad times, for health or for sickness, an' for all the trials an' misfortunes that may befall yew both—for that's it, mind yew—then I'll say to yew, ' Be man an' wife, my children, an' God bless yew both.' ”

His voice faltered just a trifle as he came to a close.

He had promised to give away that which he loved best in all the world. Loved ! How poor, how incomplete a word for that holy, untranslatable feeling which made life worth living to him in her young happiness. His glory, his idol, at whose feet he would gladly have expired without a regret, without a murmur, without a sigh, every hair of whose head he would have guarded at the price of his heart's blood. She had twined herself around his being like the slender, verdant ivy around the sturdy oak, closely linked leaf to leaf, not to be parted without hurt to either. His love for her had grown to be part of him,

inextricable, inseparable—a blot, a stain upon the fair open page of her young life would have scorched into his soul, and he had racked his brain for devices to watch over her happiness like the dragon of folklore over the legendary hidden gold.

His Angel loved this brave, handsome young fellow to whom both he and she were indebted for the rescue of their lives. It was but natural and in the fit order of things that she should love him. It was the right ordaining of a just and kind providence. But, nevertheless, he felt that in promising to allow another to share that which he held most dear, he had left himself impoverished. Would his Angel love him as she now did when her husband was there to claim her sunny smiles? What terrors lay hidden in that doubt! But he was prepared for the sacrifice, and though his voice nigh failed him as he proposed it, he had never felt calmer than when he had got it over.

"You're a darling, wise daddie," cried Miss Angel in her new-born happiness, "and you always know what is best."

She ceased the flow of her gladness when she saw that Underwood sat there mutely, undecidedly.

"But," she exclaimed with dignity, "perhaps Mr. Underwood——"

"Pray don't misjudge me, Miss Kershaw," interrupted the young journalist. "If I fail in momentary warmth for this great joy which is promised me, it is not because I underrate its value. Such blessings do not come to men and leave them even-tempered. I hope, Mr. Kershaw, you have well weighed our conversation yesterday."

"Full an' well, my boy," answered the old man. "It'll take me about a month to git things into shape, so that I can leave them safe in other hands. As soon as that is done we're off to Yewrup. Now I'm goin' to leave yew. Yew can settle all that's necessary about the


passages, an' the dresses, an' the outfit, an' all the rest of it between yew, jest as yew like."

Underwood might yet have hesitated, but he perceived in the millionaire's plan a wisdom and appreciation of facts of the highest order. The intervening year might do wonders. It was pardonable for him to hope that the destroying scythe might perhaps cut short the criminal career of his terrible father. Who knew? Any moment might bring a happy release. If Angelica Kershaw and he got married in Europe, they were rich enough to live there until such time as a return of his bogey was no longer to be dreaded. Daniel Kershaw was right, and the young man felt ever so grateful to him for having proved that he himself had been wrong.

When they were alone, when for the first time they could unburden their hearts to one another without restraint, without fear of misunderstanding; when they could unaffrightedly

bask in the sunshine of their mutual happiness, brimful of the joy of to-day, of their glowing hope of the future ; when they could sit quite close to one another and drink deep draughts of glad peace in one another's eyes, and could vow, hand in hand, each to the other that they would never, never change, nor in this world, nor in all eternity ; they forgot all about the arrangements for the proposed journey, and neither of them as much as cast a thought upon such very mundane matters as steamer tickets, frocks, and like necessities.

No happier young man lived that day in Manhattan City than Hubert Underwood, as he sat in the tram-car that was taking him to the office of his paper down town. He alighted at Union Square, the slightly oscillating movement becoming tedious to him, and walked swiftly along Broadway, glad to expand his chest and to move his limbs, as a safety-valve for his buoyant excitement.







"HE WAS SWINGING ALONG BLITHELY ACROSS THE PARK."

(Page 123.)

The long walk from Union Square to City Hall Park seemed but a dozen yards, so unconscious was he of the distance traversed.

He was swinging along blithely across the Park towards the Spruce Street entrance, not far from which the office of his paper was situated, when he jostled against a white-haired, white-faced old man, with a short, scrubby white beard, and an altogether forbidding aspect, who elbowed him aside roughly, with a curse.

The young man was far too happy, however, to be irritated by trifles. He did not bestow so much as a glance upon the old man, whose equilibrium he had unconsciously dashed out of balance, and walked on with quick step until he reached his office.

Not so the old man, the same old man who had on the previous day thrust his face between Daniel Kershaw and his content. When the old ruffian had delivered his rattling volley of oaths, he stood stock still, with his



bright piercing eyes staring, and his wicked half-toothless mouth wide open.

"Mother o' Moses," he cried to himself. "It is. It ain't—it cayn't be—but I'm derved sure it is. Jumpin' Isaac! what a find! An' me without a dime, an' nary a coat to my back. I mustn't lose sight of him—not this time, I guess—never no more. How the young scoundrel has growed! I'd swear to him, though."

He dashed after the young journalist with much swifter energy than his decrepid shrunken limbs would have warranted, dodging in and out between vehicles, keeping close to the buildings, and never for a moment allowing the young man to get more than ten yards ahead of him.

When he saw young Underwood enter the office of the great journal, he gave a long whistle, and dived into the entrance of a warehouse nearly opposite.

"Let me see," he muttered, "What was

the young good-for-nothen's name when I last cotched him in Kansas City? I guess I shall be forgettin' my own name next. It wos Underwood. That's what it wos. Mary's maiden name. I've got to commooniket with Mr. Underwood. That's what I've got to do, I reckon. I've got to let him git awear as his fond an' lovin' father is alive an' kickin'—kickin' derned hard if it's got to be, I guess."

The cellar beneath the warehouse, in the entrance of which Mr. Michael Turner—for it was he, of course—had found a temporary refuge, was occupied by a liquor and luncheon bar of inviting and prosperous appearance.

Mr. Michael Turner, after carefully reconnoitring the surrounding houses and those opposite, and assuring himself that the doorway where young Underwood had disappeared was the principal entrance leading to the editorial department, descended into the regions below, where an elegant, well-stocked bar made vigorous and tempting appeals to his

strong appetite for food and drink, an appetite which, nevertheless, had—for the moment at least—to be sternly repressed.

The rotund and ruddy-faced Hibernian bar-keeper did not relish his customer's unkempt and unwashed appearance.

"To the devil wid yez, and get out o' this plaice," he cried. "Shure an' it isn't the loikes o' yez that wants cocktails and ginslings. Take yer ugly faice out o' moi bar or Oi'll make it uglier."

Mr. Turner was not at all affrighted or affronted by this welcome, but grinned calmly at the irate son of Erin, standing with legs apart and arms akimbo.

"Is it the pepper-box yew've swallowed, Pat?" he asked jeeringly, "or is it the petroleum-can as yew cayn't digest, an' as is bustin'? Yew'll be spilin' yewr complexion, yew will, if yew excite yewrself so indecent."

"If ye don't get out o' moi bar," exclaimed the bar-tender, preparing to jump over the

obstacle that separated him from his unwelcome customer, "Oi'll chuck ye out."

"Yew keep that pertater trap o' yewrn shut. Yewr front teeth want flin' down, Pat," retorted the returned convict with an irritating quiet. "I guess it ain't a crime to ask a civil question, an' if yew was half a man, let alone a decent Irishman, yew wouldn't insult a poor man that comes to ask it, jest becos he's poor."

The appeal to his national characteristic of generosity partially appeased the barman's anger.

"Ask yer question then," he cried, "an' let me see the back o' yer head when ye've asked it."

"Lord, I guessed as yew wosn't half as snacky as yew made yewrself out to be," continued Mr. Michael Turner. "I ony wanted to know, if so be as yew would tell me, if Mr. Hubert Underwood is a-frequentin' this bar?"

"Mr. Underwood!" sneered the barman. "Vat's Mr. Underwood loike to do wid a jail-

faice loike yez? Faix, an' vat should Oi be answerin' such a question for?"

"Mr. Underwood is a perteckler friend o' mine," drawled Turner—"a very old friend, an' if he knowed as yew sassed me he'd be annoyed—very annoyed."

The mention of the young journalist's name, however unauthorised it seemed, threw a measure of oil upon the troubled waters.

"Mr. Underwood does come here," replied the bar-keeper doggedly, "an' now ye can wait for him at the doore."

"Thank yew kindly for yewr grate politeness an' civility," responded the old man with a burlesque bow. He had kept a lynx-like watch upon the entrance opposite, and besides gaining time to form a plan, he had assured himself by independent testimony that the person he had followed was really Hubert Underwood.

While he was still watching and seeking for phrases wherewith to continue his wordy war-

fare, the young man of letters reappeared at the entrance opposite, and his fond parent flew up the short flight of steps as if he had been shot from a bow.

Hubert walked with his usual briskness to the corner of William Street. After following that street he rapidly turned the corner of Fulton Street, the old convict in full pursuit all the while. The pavement was thronged, and the street full of vehicles. At the corner of Nassau Street his misfortune would have it that a couple of big vans laden with packing-cases barred his way, and before the old man could pass this obstacle, the son had entered the great throbbing hive of Broadway and was lost to sight.

The old villain, in his rage at being thus baffled, sat himself down on a small bale of dry goods that was lying in the entrance of a warehouse, cursing and swearing with such fury that he was peremptorily ordered away by a clerk. When he hesitated to obey that

summons, he met with more energetic treatment than the bar-tender had meted out to him. An iron fist gripped him by the collar of his coat and flung him with contumely into the gutter, where only by a mercy of providence he escaped being run over and crushed by passing conveyances. He gathered himself together, scowling and threatening, and slunk away, bruised, muddy, and sore.

There was no help for it. He was foiled for the moment, and he would have to play the waiting game. He would have to be humble, very humble ; he would have to play the part of a poor unfortunate petitioner for alms, if need be ; but he would find Mr. Hubert Underwood, and having found him he would fasten on him, and never, never lose sight of him again.

He dodged back into Fulton Street. A little way down, a German fruit and provision merchant was standing at the entrance of his store. Good nature was marked all over his

adipose face, and Mr. Michael Turner perceived at a glance that here he was likely to meet with generosity.

He looked piteously at the Teuton.

"Would yew be so very, very kind, sir," he whispered in his softest and most mellow tone, "as to give a poor man as ain't got a cent a sheet of paper an' an envelope to write to his ony son as doesn't know as his father has jest come out o' hospital, and is still very, very sick?"

The fat German looked the old rascal up and down dubiously.

"Gome in," he said, with a broad grin. "I guess you vos a old tief, boot you steals noddins here."

With that he led Mr. Turner to a little high desk and stool, and placed a sheet of paper and envelope, and pen and ink before him, crossing his arms whilst the white-headed ruffian, with the most woe-begone face imaginable, sat down and scribbled his note.



When the epistle was written and the envelope closed and addressed, the old scoundrel turned out his pocket as if searching for coins that ought to have been stowed away there.

"Oh, you knows very vell you got noddins dare," laughed the provision merchant, "und if I give you dwendy-fife sents you buy viskey. Here is dwendy-fife sents, you go und buy viskey."

The doubly lucky rascal went away with profuse expressions of gratitude, calling upon the head of his benefactor all the blessings of a providence that had been so unkind to him. Never had so small a sum as twenty-five cents reaped more fervent thanks and good wishes.

Mr. Turner felt that he was on the high road to fortune when, with his quarter of a dollar in his pocket, and his epistle in his hand, he entered the office of the big journal.

He was immediately accosted and stopped by a clerk.

"Your business?" was the gruff demand.

He remembered that humbleness was his best resource, and bent his neck to the rod.

"Would yew please be so kind as to tell me if Mr. Underwood is in the office, an' if I can see him?" he asked.

"Mr. Underwood ain't in, and you couldn't see him if he were," was the abrupt and decisive reply.

"Could I leave this note for him, if yew please?" he continued cringingly.

"You can leave the note for him and go," was the answer he obtained.

"I guess I've lost a day," he muttered to himself as he stepped into the street again, "an' I've got to keep my eyes skinned now, day an' night. When he'll get away from me agin, I guess he'll be clever—that he will."

## CHAPTER VII.

### *FATHER AND SON.*

WHEN Hubert Underwood arrived at his office that evening as usual, he found Mr. Michael Turner's note on his desk. He thought his heart was about to cease beating when he recognised the handwriting.

"My God!" he cried to himself; "so early! Comes damnation swift upon the heels of joy?"

He opened the missive with trembling fingers.

"My dear Son," it read. "I have not written to you for a long time now, but it was not my fault. You went away without leaving your address, and I have been staying at a place where they would not let me inquire

after you. I am very anxious to know if you are really well and doing well. I must say that I have had my troubles, and am, at the present moment, not at all thriving. I guess that will change, though, when we are together again; for, my dear son, now that I have so fortunately found you, I mean to reform, and I will never leave you again, and I know that you will be glad to see your old father and make him comfortable in his old age. I'll be looking out for you right opposite your office, and I guess you'll understand when I tell you, it is no use your trying to sneak away, and looking as though you was ashamed of your old father that has never lost his affection for you in spite of your bad treatment of him. Your loving parent until death do us part, Mike Turner."

"And it was written, 'Honour thy father and thy mother all the days of thy life,' " said the young man when he had finished the letter. "The Great Legislator of the world made no

exception, and yet there must have been cases like mine, before mine."

He stepped to the window of the office, and, sure enough, half hid away in the entrance of the big warehouse opposite, stood the old convict. The lamps were already alight, and the yellow glow of one fell full upon the old man's face, and disclosed to the unfortunate son the pitiable, the disgusting condition of his parent's attire. It showed him the advancing ravages which a life of debauchery and riot had wrought in that once stalwart frame, and in those once nearly prepossessing features. A cold shiver ran through him at the thought that that was the man to whom he owed his being, who could claim obedience and honouring solicitude from him.

He could have easily have left the office, without passing through the front entrance, by descending to the machine room, and thence, across a little court, into the next street. On the previous day he might have

deemed such a device feasible, worth trying. The father evidently did not yet know where the son lived, and the clerks downstairs could be trusted not to vouchsafe the slightest information. He might have hurried his departure to Europe, and once there, he might have laughed at the old villain's baffled rage and defied all his schemes, making him such an allowance as would enable him to live in comfort if he forswore reckless and indecent revelry. He was well aware, however, that no allowance that he could possibly make would quench the senile reprobate's thirst for debauch, if it were within his power personally to demand and exact more money. Water poured into a sieve flowed not away more rapidly than money ran through the old sinner's fingers. And then there were to be dreaded the sickening repetitions of degradation which he brought upon himself and upon his son, a catalogue of terror and shame in store for the latter.

But yesterday Hubert Underwood had sipped a foretaste of a bliss to come, and had plighted his troth to the fair girl who loved him. He could not desert her, he could not break his word. The horrible secret had to be kept from her at any cost. Circumspection and calm deliberation coupled with energetic action might bring success, and by keeping a tight rein with a firm hand, the danger of exposure might perhaps be avoided. What did the old villain want? Money! He should have it, as much as he wanted, on the condition that he kept out of sight. There was only a month to be got over; after that—when they were once upon the ocean or in the old world—he might rage, and sputter, and fume, and curse, and drink himself to death—the shame, whatever it was, could easily be kept far removed from the path of the young man's love.

Underwood took three ten-dollar bills from his wallet, and enclosed them in an envelope.

"Since you are my father," he wrote, "and insist upon your right of being the bane of my life, I have to bear it, however unwillingly. In your present appearance you are an even more palpable disgrace to me than you have hitherto been. Buy yourself a suit of clothes, get yourself shaved and washed, and meet me in two hours' time at the corner of Fulton Street and Broadway. You can set your mind at rest upon one thing. I do not intend to sneak away, as you call it; and if you will only make it possible for me to treat you as a son ought to treat his father, I am ready to do so."

He closed the envelope and called the office messenger, a sprightly, bright-eyed lad.

"Do you see that old man in the doorway over there?" he asked.

"That old scamp that looks as if he'd just come from Sing Sing, and ought to be there again?" was the forward inquiry.

"That same old scamp," replied Hubert,



rather nettled at the lad's sally. "Give him this note. Ask no questions and answer none, and come straight back."

"I reckon the boy means square," muttered the old man, when he had opened and read the letter, and felt the rustling bank-notes in his hand. "He's one o' them derved fools as think it wrong to tell a lie, an' all such blamed priest's foolery."

The average Western frontier rowdy is not a person distinguished by neatness and sobriety of taste, and such a creature, let loose upon a second-hand clothing store, would be sure to buy that which most attracts the eye. Mr. Michael Turner, when he returned from his fitting and furbishing expedition, and stood smiling at the corner of Fulton Street and Broadway, was a sight for gods and little fishes. The barber's razor had worked wonders with his facial appearance. The white scrubby beard was gone, his hair cropped into a similitude of order, and his short white mous-

tache gave him quite a soldierly air. An extremely tall white hat sat proudly upon his head. His broadly striped trousers would have brought joy to the heart of an Ogallala chief. His waistcoat, once the Sunday adornment of an Irish emigrant whose misfortune had forced him to part with it, was of red, white, and yellow-flowered silk; and the costume was completed by a bright blue cloth frock-coat, rendered resplendent by big brass buttons. He had also purchased a cane, the knob of which he, from time to time, sucked in fond self-admiration.

He had been lounging about that corner for a quarter of an hour when Hubert Underwood came up to him swiftly, and scanned his new attire with a disapproving eye.

"I forgot that you were sure to make a scarecrow of yourself if you were left to your own devices," he said. "At any rate, it's better than your last rags."

The old convict, feeling at that moment

supremely happy, was about to make a jocular reply, when his son cut him short.

“Don’t talk now,” he said, “but come along. You’ll have time to say as much as you like when we’re alone.”

A rapid walk along Broadway and Canal Street brought them to an hotel and boarding-house frequented by the sailors from the vessels at the neighbouring wharves. The hostelry bore the high-sounding appellation of “The Nelson Grand Hotel,” but the appointments and accommodation were of that primitive kind generally found in the better class of sailors’ boarding-houses.

“I’ll get you a room here for the present,” said Hubert Underwood to his father. “I know the proprietor. He’s a good honest fellow, a little rough, and not too choice in his language ; but that won’t be a detriment in your eyes. The food is very fair and plentiful, and I’ll see that you do not go short of a reasonable amount of drink.”

“Reasonable!” exclaimed the old convict, growing more and more merry every moment, as the certainty of immediate comfort was approaching closer. “I guess I’ll have to put my inturpreeation on that word, an’ not yewrn. Thar’s men as would make hogs o’ themselves on a bottle o’ rye whisky, an’ thar’s men as could drink a gallon an’ be as sober as I am now; an’ if I ain’t disgustin’ sober, yew may say I ain’t yewr father.”

He had, during his walk, turned and twisted in his wicked mind the appreciation of his prospects, and had quickly proceeded with the formulation of a plan for the more successful squeezing of money from his undutiful son. He had rapidly arrived at the conclusion that the waiting game was again the wisest and the most desirable. He knew next to nothing about his son, about his employment, his career, his means, his connections of friendship, and all the weak points that might be blistered, and rendered sore and painful, and kept festering

by the foul contagion which he might cunningly apply. He would express a desire to forget, and wipe out, if possible, the stain of his past life, and he already laughed in his sleeve at the idea of the rollicking comedy he would play for that purpose. He would gain that foolish boy's confidence, and when he had wheedled all his little secrets out of him, he would use them as a mental rack for the satisfaction of his own greed and debauched lust.

The bar was full of guests, sailors principally, all of them drinking and smoking, and some of them playing with cards and dice.

Mr. Michael Turner took an immediate liking to the place and its habitués, as in them he saw possible boon companions.

"I knowed all along," he said, "as I'd ony got to find yew, an' yew'd make yewr old father happy. Thar was them as said that yew was a sneak, an' a rotter, to go away in the middle o' the night, an' never leave no address, an' never say good-bye nor nothen'; but I allus

said, 'Yew leave him alone ; he is all right an' rumbo.' An' yew are, ain't yew ?"

Hubert cast a dubious glance upon his father. Was his devil after all not as black as he had feared him to be ? Was there a spark of human feeling left in the old rogue's heart ? What a godsend, what a relief it would be !

"You wait here for me," he said to his father, pointing to a seat in the bar, "while I find the proprietor, and make arrangements with him."

"Golly for yew," ejaculated Turner. "I'll be as quiet as a baar that's a-watchin' the honey-pot."

The vista that was expanding before the old ruffian's eyes was a pleasurable one indeed. A good bed, plenty of food, lots of drink, no bother to get it, no care for the morrow,—all these were enough to satisfy his immediate cravings. When the time would come that he would hunger for more exciting fare, he could put the screw on, gently or viciously, as might

be needed. For the present it would be best to be very, very repentant of the past, and demonstratively anxious to pass the rest of his days in honourable peace and quiet.

The noisy crowd that filled the room were just the sort of surroundings that he liked. He had been terribly afraid that Hubert would take him up town with him, to some decorous boarding-house, where a prim and starched landlady would resent the merest foible, or occasional excess in word or deed, as an outrage upon the dignity of her house, where he would always have to mind his p's and q's, at least while he desired not to offend his son, and where an oath would be regarded as sacrilege.

"I've seen the proprietor," said Hubert on his return. "He has a nice airy room for you on the third floor. You are to have all your meals, and as much tobacco as you like, and six glasses of whisky a day."

"Six glasses? six?" whined the old ruffian.  
"Why don't yew say six thimblefuls? It ain't

enough to rinse yewr back teeth, let alone wet yewr throat ; an' I tell yew thar's a lot o' cholera goin' about, an' whisky's the ony thing that's bin proved to keep it off. Say twenty, an' I'll see how it'll work."

"You shall have ten, and not half a one more," answered Hubert ; "and I will, in addition to that, allow you a dollar a day pocket-money ; and as you are evidently without a second shirt, here are twenty dollars more to buy what you need. I will continue the allowance to you so long, and only so long, as you behave like a decent man, and as I suffer no annoyance either on account of your past career or your present one."

"Don't be too hard on a poor old man," exclaimed Turner. "I'll be so good, yew'll see. I've had my misfortuns, an' I don't want no more. I'm goin' to repent, I am, an' be honest, an' a ornimint to my white hairs."

The old rascal bore, with that promise, so contrite an expression, and apparently evinced



so earnest a desire to reform, that Hubert had to steel his heart not to grip him by the hand and thank him. He promised to return and give him a look up the next day. He would have been less disposed to such a generous appreciation of his father's character, had he, the moment his back was turned, seen the old rascal jump lithely on a bench and execute a merry jig amid the admiring bravos of the card-playing sailors.

Mr. Michael Turner had been grandly victorious all along the line. Food, lodgings, tobacco, drink he was to have for nothing ; and if he wanted more drink, he had money wherewith to purchase it. Hubert would surely grant further supplies of cash rather than see his father go shirtless.

The first day passed, and the second day, and the third day, and Mr. Michael Turner had, to all intents and purposes, kept his promise. Inquiries with the landlord proved that he had, on each occasion, retired to his

bed in the early hours of the morning, and had been able to reach his couch with the assistance of the night porter ; but inebriety, such as he was guilty of, appeared to be quite according to the customs of the establishment, and he far from being singular in that respect. In his conversations with Hubert, who called upon him every day and daily provided the additional supplies of pocket-money, he was so apparently sorry for his past misdoings that his son's hope budded quite anew, and in his guileless misappreciation of the old rascal's character, he was beginning to deliberate whether he ought not immediately to inform Daniel Kershaw of his father's return.

He had hitherto refrained from telling the sturdy old pioneer that danger was looming ahead, blacker and nearer than it had been expected. After passing two nights in sleepless discomfort, he decided that it was best carefully to examine that danger in all its bearings and at all points, before disturbing by its announce-

ment the peace and comfort of the household on Fifth Avenue.

Falling an easy victim to the old convict's rascally comedy, he began to upbraid and blame himself for having, as he imagined, hitherto withheld from the old man the means of a sincere repentance and reform. A vicious and cold-blooded glitter in the old ruffian's eyes twice or thrice chilled his warmth of generous appreciation, and being naturally shrewd, and as a reporter accustomed to deal with rogues of all kinds, he had, on those occasions, asked himself if he was not being deceived. But Mr. Michael Turner, during a long criminal career, had become an expert comedian, who could have given valuable lessons to many a professional actor, and the unfavourable impressions vanished nearly as quickly as they had been formed. Gradually, and bit by bit, Mr. Turner possessed himself of fragmentary but valuable information regarding his son's employment, mode of living, and means. Upon

the subject of his residence, of his friends, and other connections, the young man remained sternly incommunicative, and Mr. Turner quickly conceived that it was unprofitable for the moment to press these inquiries.

Although such patience as a cat displays in watching for its prey might have been fitly included among Mr. Michael Turner's characteristics, the comparatively handsome allowance which his son made him was, to his greedy mind, but a toothsome sample of the far more splendid emoluments which the future promised, and he was anxious to enjoy those increased emoluments at as early a period as possible. He was wise enough to desire to handle with due care the goose that laid the golden eggs, and at the same time he set his wits to work to discover the means of enforcing the bird's greater activity. His son would not vouchsafe such information about himself as would enable him to give a turn to the winch, therefore he concluded that it was time to

secure the required knowledge by personal investigation.

To start with, it was imperatively essential that he should know where Mr. Hubert Underwood lived. The young man had answered evasively the inquiries about his address, and the proprietor of the Nelson Grand Hotel, on having a tempting bait thrown to him, declined to swallow it. He either did not know, or had been told to profess ignorance on the subject. To lie in wait for the young journalist anywhere near his office would be likely to lead to failure, and perhaps to annoyance. To follow him after his usual call at the Nelson Grand Hotel would be equally useless. To escape detection he would be compelled to allow his son a considerable start, and the latter's legs were younger and more vigorous than his own.

But Michael Turner, Esq., was not so easily baffled. He hatched a little plan, and after looking at it at all points, approved of it ad-

miringly. The young man generally called at Canal Street about half-past nine in the morning. Mr. Turner would be accidentally absent on such an occasion but hidden so conveniently close to and in sight of the hotel, that he could dog the young man's footsteps with every chance of success and without fear of being found out. His experience of border warfare had told him that an Indian who wore blue feathers or a red blanket was a more conspicuous mark for bullets than one who went naked, and that a man, to pass unnoticed in a crowd, at short distances even, should wear dull, dark brown, or grey clothing. His resplendently gaudy suit pleased his fancy mightily, but he knew that it was conspicuous a couple of hundred yards away. He therefore strolled down the street, and reluctantly expended ten dollars in the purchase of a second-hand dark grey woollen suit and a black felt hat. He arrayed himself in these on the following morning, and left the hotel at nine o'clock, finding,

a minute or two afterwards, a comfortable ambush in a lager-beer cellar, less than twenty yards distant, on the other side of the street.

He was doubly in luck's way that morning. His son not only called at the hotel, but, when he left it, he took neither car, omnibus, nor railway, but walked at his usual brisk pace through Thompson Street and Washington Square into Fifth Avenue, which he followed until he came to a block in the near vicinity of Reservoir Square. Here the young man ascended the front steps of a handsome mansion, and the door being opened by an obsequiously bowing servant in answer to his summons, he disappeared within.

Here was a find. He was shrewd enough to surmise that his son did not live in that grand house, the unmistakable residence of a man of great wealth, but it was certain that he was on terms of friendly acquaintance at least with the owner of the noble-looking mansion.

As Mr. Michael Turner stood at the street

corner, chuckling heartily over his lucky discovery and watching the big house with cat's eyes, a letter-carrier brushed past him, and the old villain instantly clutched at the opportunity an official acquaintance with the neighbourhood might afford him.

He stopped the man.

"Would yew mind tellin' me, boss," he asked, assuming the air and manner of an admiring and gaping countryman, "who lives in that almighty fine house over thar—the one with the big blue chinee pots in the window?"

"That one? The one with the palms at the door, you mean," rejoined the postman.

Mr. Turner nodded assent.

"Mr. Daniel Kershaw lives there," answered the man.

Turner started in spite of himself, and his eyes glittered with a demoniac lustre. He gasped for breath for a few seconds' space, and then asked,—

"Did yew say Dan Kershaw, boss?"



"Yes, Daniel Kershaw, Esquire," the letter-carrier replied pointedly, and was about to proceed on his road, when the old man detained him.

"I'm from the West," he said, "and out thar I knowed a Dan Kershaw. He owned a whole town out thar."

"I reckon it's the same man," answered the postman. "This one is Mr. Daniel Kershaw of Angelica City. I tell you he's got a pile, an' no error."

"Dan Kershaw!" cried the old scoundrel when the man had turned his back. "Dan Kershaw!"

A livid hate distorted his face.

"The man that hanged poor Joe," he hissed savagely between his teeth, "an' would have hanged me if he'd got hold o' me. I've got a derved big bone to pick with yew, Dan, an' I guess I'll pick it clean afore I'm many days older."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *A STUDY OF REVENGE.*

UNFORTUNATELY for Mr. Michael Turner, Fifth Avenue is an inconvenient place for the work of a spy. No dimly lit doorways favour dodging and sneaking, no luncheon bars or beer cellars afford ready refuge, no bales or cases of goods form shelter boxes behind which to hide, the traffic in the street is comparatively slow and fashionable, and no bustling crowds permit of a rapid escape in case of detection. In addition to that, the Kershaw mansion was fitted with big, broad bow windows commanding a full view of the Avenue up and down, which made it quite as easy for any one in the house to see Mr.

Michael Turner, as it was for Mr. Michael Turner to see them.

The old villain was, however, acting under the added impulse of his newly re-discovered hate. To blackmail his son was a matter of stern business—a necessity even, for without it his natural taste for lewdness and debauchery could not be satisfied. But to blackmail Daniel Kershaw was a real downright pleasure, and every golden coin he could wring from his enemy, every little torture of doubt, of insult, of injury, he could inflict upon him, would be a draught of pleasurable intoxication. He had a score to settle with Mr. Daniel Kershaw—a score of very old standing, and his senile blood boiled when he remembered the seemingly interminable dreadful hours, during which, starving, thirsty, hunted like a wild beast, he had lain hidden in the thicket on the Canadian, while those fiends of Daniel Kershaw's lynched his friend and partner. He looked upon himself as the champion of a holy cause

in taking upon himself, as far as he could, the task of revenging Hellfire Joe's death on the man who had pronounced the latter's doom.

The stimulus of his black thoughts made him more reckless than he would otherwise have been, and he dodged about, and peered around the street corner with an agility which many a detective might have envied.

More than an hour passed in this way.

He noticed that numerous persons of all classes called at Kershaw's house, and that all of them left it again, except Hubert, who remained.

This discovery was certainly a progressive step in his investigation.


The young man was either in the house on business, or he was employed there, or he was there on friendly invitation. He was certainly not a mere acquaintance.

Shortly after that, a well-appointed brougham, drawn by a pair of splendidly stepping

horses, drove to the door, and after a pause of a few minutes, a young lady came out of the house, followed by the young journalist.

The old ruffian tried every device he could think of for the purpose of getting a glimpse of her face, but she had moved so that the carriage stood between him and her, and more than that, Daniel Kershaw appeared at the window, waving his hand to the girl—Daniel Kershaw, big, strong, stalwart, king-like—Daniel Kershaw, with silver white hair, but looking every inch the terror to evil-doers he was out on the plains—a man of steel with whom no one ever dared to trifle.

Mr. Michael Turner, when he saw that determined face, quite as determined now as he ever had known it, did not feel quite so sure that there was unalloyed pleasure in store for him in tackling such an enemy. He had known men to beard Daniel Kershaw, but none who had bearded him and had not regretted it sorely. A sudden inspiration seized



the old ruffian, that it might be as well to use the hand of iron in the glove of velvet, and to procrastinate a fierce attack until such time as his enemy's back were turned, or some other opportunity were afforded of using stealth and cunning. Daniel Kershaw had to be made to suffer, but it was wiser that he should feel the pain without making Mr. Michael Turner suffer in return.

Young Underwood and the girl entered the brougham and drove away down town, without the eager watcher having obtained the slightest glimpse of her features.

Hubert was evidently on terms of favoured intimacy with her, and it was of the utmost importance to his father to know all about her.

Turner looked about him for persons or places to make cautious inquiries, but no one passed him whom he dared to address, and there were no shops near by. A policeman sauntered leisurely by him at the moment, but

Mr. Michael Turner, being impregnated by wholesome respect for the guardians of the law, did not venture to interrogate him.

The side street was composed entirely of private houses, and the confectioner's shop which he entered in the next avenue was full of ladies and children; the saleswoman was extremely busy, and nearly snapped his head off. At the drug store, close by, he was kept waiting for full fifteen minutes without having the slightest attention paid to him, every attempt at an inquiry being met with a "Sit down, sir. In a minute or two."

Disconcerted, but not abashed, he tried the next store, a boot and shoe emporium, and was peremptorily ordered out of the place by an irate attendant, who cried, "Two doors farther down. Cayn't you see this is the ladies' department? Ain't you got eyes in your head?"

That neighbourhood was apparently unlucky with him, and he walked to the next avenue,

at the corner of which he found the door of a grocery store standing hospitably open, and, hurrah ! there was a bar where liquors were retailed at extremely reasonable prices.

Mr. Michael Turner had a penchant for purchasing his drinks at grocery stores. He knew that the quantity he would be able to consume would be considerably in excess of that allowed him at the ordinary saloon. He would therefore be able to refresh the inner man, and, perhaps, to serve his purpose at the same time.

The storekeeper proved to be a godsend of loquacity. Yes, he knew Mr. Daniel Kershaw ; he had seen him in the street, and had called on him at his house. Mr. Daniel Kershaw did not deal with him, but he (the storekeeper) hoped he would before long. Lists of prices and prospectuses had been sent to him. Did the stranger know Mr. Daniel Kershaw ? Yes, the stranger did know him. The storekeeper meant no offence, but if he,



the stranger, could obtain for him Mr. Daniel Kershaw's custom, he would pay a handsome commission. Mr. Michael Turner guessed he would think the matter over. He had known Mr. Daniel Kershaw out West, but that was years ago, and since then Mr. Daniel Kershaw had found gold, and he, the stranger, had not found gold. As likely as not, a case of swelled head, but Mr. Michael Turner would see if he could influence Mr. Daniel Kershaw to deal with the affable storekeeper. Who was the young lady who lived with Mr. Kershaw? She was Mr. Kershaw's only daughter. Strange, Mr. Michael Turner never knew that Mr. Kershaw had been married. Who was the young gentleman with whom Miss Kershaw was driving about, the tall, good-looking young man, with the little turned-up moustache? That was Mr. Kershaw's secretary, Mr. Hubert Underwood. He was a very clever young man, and people said he would be a great writer one of these days. That

was very nice ; did people say anything else ? Yes, people said—but he, the storekeeper, wouldn't have it repeated for the world—that **Mr. Underwood** was engaged to be married to Miss Kershaw, but people often did say such foolish things.

Mr. Michael Turner, conceiving that by this time he had received the full value, both in drink and information, for his fifteen cents, thanked the storekeeper with such politeness as he was capable of, and went on his way rejoicing.

One elicited piece of information bothered him.

How came Daniel Kershaw by a daughter ?

That young lady was at least eighteen or nineteen years old, perhaps twenty or even more. He had known Daniel Kershaw well, eighteen or nineteen years ago, and he was absolutely certain that, at that time, the latter was unmarried, and not even thinking of getting married.

He walked leisurely back to Fifth Avenue, and lounged about the corner of the side street where he could get an easy view of Daniel Kershaw's house. The position of affairs in the Western millionaire's household, as revealed to him by the loquacious grocer, perplexed him sorely. How could Daniel Kershaw, never having been married, have a daughter? That was, after all, not out of the range of possibility. It might be one of those little family secrets over which charitable veils are drawn.

After impatiently waiting for what seemed to him an unconscionably long time, he had the satisfaction of seeing the brougham return, and, after depositing Hubert Underwood, and the young lady at the door, drive away again.

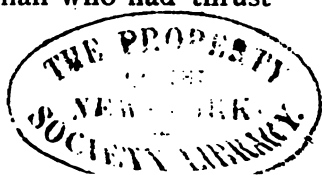
Directly afterwards the young lady appeared at the first floor window, and he had an excellent opportunity of seeing her face.

He knew the face, and he recognised the resemblance in an instant. That was the

face of Hellfire Joe's wife, the famous Mexican beauty who had died in giving birth to her baby. That girl was the living image of her mother. She was Hellfire Joe's daughter, and no other.

He saw it all clearly. Dan Kershaw had brought up Joe Robinson's daughter as his own. It would be worth while to discover if the girl knew that Dan Kershaw was not her father; if she knew that the man who called himself her father was the actual prime mover in her real father's untimely death.

It would also be well to know if Kershaw was much attached to his pretended daughter, and she to him; whether or not a convenient screw of torture could be formed by the threat of springing the naked facts upon the young lady, by dashing into her face the hard truth that her father had been an assassin who had met his death upon the gallows, and that Daniel Kershaw was the man who had thrust the rope around his neck.



The tangled skein was being unravelled fast, and he held nearly all the ends between his fingers. And his own son, the son of Hellfire Joe's friend and partner, was presumed to be engaged to marry Hellfire Joe's child.

He would clearly establish the last point, and then go to work swiftly, viciously, mercilessly. Money, plenty of money, would be very welcome, but plenty of money and stinging revenge would be doubly grateful.

He had, he thought, sufficiently established himself in his son's confidence to flatter himself that, if he but provided a sufficiently inviting bait, Hubert would fall into the trap. He settled in his own mind what the trap and the bait were to be, and resolved to set the snare the very next morning.

The rest of the day was marked in red letters in the calendar of Mr. Turner's debauchery. He determined to celebrate his prosperous progress by getting as drunk as the

proverbial lord, but there was a spice of wisdom in his folly, for he made up his mind to get the full measure of his intoxication early in the evening, so that he might be able to sleep off its effects before his son called the following day.

The idea was no sooner conceived than acted upon, and a dozen lords could not together be more inebriated than Mr. Turner was half an hour after he had fairly started.

When the old ruffian was intoxicated, he was distinguished by three prominent characteristics, the first being the mad liberality with which he bought drinks for everybody within sight; the second his animal craving for female society, generally of the lowest, the most degraded, and the most boisterous type; and, thirdly, a spirit of fiery pugnacity, which inevitably resulted in quarrels. The senile debauchee, having had his full fling in spending his son's allowance, and having surrounded himself with three damsels who were quite as

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capable as he in the consumption of ardent liquors, must needs get at loggerheads with a brawny, fair-haired Swedish sailor, the result being that he was in a trice severely kicked, badly bruised, and obliged to fly for his life to his bedroom, minus his frail ones, and minus a ready supply of whisky. It is said that a special providence watches over such unworthy drunkards as he, and in this case he fared indeed better than he deserved, for the excitement and the drink combined resulted in his falling asleep, and not waking till early next morning.

The dawning day found Mr. Turner rubbing his black bruises, but glad to discover that no bones were broken. A big gulp of whisky steadied his shaking nerves, and after collecting his wits, he felt himself ready to meet his son.

The old ruffian pretended to be suffering from a bad headache when the latter called.

"I've bin an' took a glass too much last

night, my boy," he said, "but I shan't do it agin. I guess it ain't so easy to get shut of an old habit like that. I was stone tired last night. I'd bin havin' a derned long walk up town an' back agin. Long walks do me good. An' I've bin lookin' for a man as I've bin wantin' to come up with for ever so long. I've had a grudge agin him this many a year, an' I want to get on the prairie with him."

"Who is it?" asked young Underwood casually.

"Oh, I guess yew don't know him," answered the old villain, in his best comedy style, keeping his coldly glittering eye fixed upon the young man. "It's a man that's done me a mountain of wrong. I don't know as yew've ever heerd o' my pardner, Joe Robinson, Hell-fire Joe; he was a rough 'un, but he wosn't a bad 'un if yew knowed him. Waal, that man as I've bin a-wantin' to meet hanged him, an' he would have hanged *me*, I tell yew, if he'd cotched me."

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"I should have thought that is *not* the sort of acquaintance you would care to meet again," retorted young Underwood, with a cold smile.

"Oh, I've got my reasons," exclaimed Mr. Turner. "Joe Robinson had a daughter. She was quite a baby when poor Joe was lynched, but now I guess she'd be nigh on twenty year old. The brute that hanged her father carried her off, an' he's bin bringin' her up as his own daughter, but I won't have the gell kept ignorin' of her father's name."

"Where is the girl?" asked the young man, getting interested in his father's recital. "Who is the man?"

"I reckon yew might have heerd about him," answered the old man, looking fixedly at his son. "He's worth a pile. He's got an all-fired fine house on Fifth Avenue. His name is Dan Kershaw."

That bolt, to Mr. Michael Turner's blank dismay, went wide of the mark, and returned to

strike the ruffian's own head, like a misdirected boomerang.

Hubert Underwood, his eyes aglow with fierce resentment, with his teeth hard set, and his fists clenched, turned his chair, and glared his father full in the face.

"You have been following me," he cried, with a quiet intensity. "Confess it. You have been following me, or I may forget that I am your son and throttle you."

The turn which the affair had taken so took the old man by surprise that he could only stammer,—

"I ain't done nothen'. I've got a right to take a walk, if I want to. I guess, I've got——"

"Confess you've been playing the spy upon me," repeated Hubert, with slow deliberation. "It will be better for you to tell the truth."

Mr. Michael Turner took a convenient refuge in an assumption of offended silence.

"Well," continued the young man, "since

you will not speak, I will confide to you what *I* have done. I naturally wanted to know how you came to New York, when you came, in what wise you came, where you came from, and I employed the time you occupied in dogging my footsteps by setting an inquiry agent to discover particulars of Michael Turner's—Cheeseface Mike's—latest career."

The old man's pale features turned a ghastly ashen at that unexpected sally.

"The agent required only two days," the young journalist went on slowly and coldly, "to discover that Michael Turner was, about three weeks ago, an inmate of the jail at Cleveland, Ohio, having been condemned to a lengthened term of hard labour for theft and attempted murder in a house of illfame. He learned further that Michael Turner, together with two other convicts, escaped from that prison during the sudden illness of the head jailer, who, it has since been proved, was poisoned by accomplices, and that the Cleve-

land police are at this moment actively searching for Mr. Michael Turner. Now, as a good citizen, it is my duty to inform the police of the whereabouts of Cheeseface Mike, and by Heaven I will do it if you stir out of this house another yard without my express permission, if you as much as whisper what you said to me just now to a living soul."

"Yew'd have yewr father sent back to pris'n?" hissed the baffled scoundrel. "Waal, a fine thing it would be for all the world to read in the papers that Mr. Hubert Underwood, the nice young gentleman, is the son of a thief."

"Don't you lay the flattering unction to your soul that you can scare me with that bogey. There would be no report in the papers about your arrest. I'd call in the first policeman and give you into custody. There would be no trial, and if there were, I would only have to explain my position to the news editors and there is not a paper in New York or the States

which would report the case. I've got you by the throat, and give you the option to live comfortably on such reduced allowance as I will now make you, or go back to jail. But I'll do my best to prevent you from harming those I care for, as sure as there is a God above us who'll absolve me if I curse and hate my own father. Now do your damndest at your peril."

"Golly!" exclaimed the old villain, when his son had left the room. "He ain't the fool I took him for. I might ha' knowed it," he added, nearly proudly, "he's my son."

He was not long left in doubt for confirmation of the surprising discovery that Hubert was not the fool he had thought him to be, for less than five minutes after the close of their interview, the proprietor of the Nelson Grand Hotel opened the bedroom door, and barely putting in his head with the remark, "Oh, you're there all right, are you?" closed the door again.

The moment afterwards Mr. Turner heard the key turned in the lock, and a sudden white rage seethed within him.

He bounded to the door and tried the handle. He was locked in.

It would be neither desirable nor profitable here to record or imitate the avalanche of oaths and curses with which the caged scoundrel greeted this novel state of things. He raved, and jumped, and danced up and down the room like a lunatic, tearing his sparse hair, and knocking his head against the wall in sheer insane fury. Having exhausted himself in such futile rage, he flew to his habitual fountain of relief, the whisky bottle; but that was empty, and not a drop could he wheedle or coax out of it to moisten his parched throat.

He ran to the bell and rang it violently, but obtained no response. Thereupon he commenced to hammer at the door like a madman, screeching and screaming, shouting himself hoarse at the same time with the filthiest and

most loathsome language that ever defiled human lips.

By-and-by the heavy tread of the stalwart landlord reached the third floor, and the bedroom door was opened.

Mr. Turner, by that time, was nearly speechless with frenzy.

"You're a fine old villain," exclaimed the proprietor, standing there with arms crossed over his chest. "I'd advise you to make less noise, if you don't want to get that ugly head o' yours broken."

"How dare you lock me in?" roared Mr. Turner.

"Dare?" sneered the landlord with a laugh. "I'll dare lock you in again, and more than that. If it's got to be, I'll gag you, and tie you hand and foot. How will you like that, you old thief?"

The aged scoundrel would have flown at the proprietor's throat, had not the latter's broad chest betokened a forbidding strength. He

glared about him for a weapon, but saw none ready to his hand.

"Yew've got no right to lock me in," he whined in a sputtering rage. "It's agin the law. It's agin the law."

"Law?" was the contemptuous reply he got. "I guess you've had your stomachful of the law, and will get it again, no doubt. I've got my instructions from Mr. Underwood. You've got to stay in this room until you're permitted to move. And more than that. Not a drop of liquor will you get while you're here. And if you make the slightest attempt to escape, I'll have to take you by the scruff of the neck, and run you out into the street, and hand you over to the first policeman. Now, which is it to be?"

His rage and discomfiture overpowered the white-haired rogue, and he sat down on the bed and fairly blubbered. The landlord threw out an "I guess you understand what you've got to do now," and left the room, locking the door behind him.



## CHAPTER IX.

*"YOU HAVE BEEN MY FATHER."*

WHILE the black thunder clouds of the exposure of her father's shame were rolling nearer and threatening Miss Angel's peace, the young lady was in the happiest and busiest of moods. An outfit had to be ordered, and for the first time in her young life Miss Kershaw took an interest, a great interest, in female finery and milliner's artifices. She considered that, in going abroad, she was leaving the country which was her own home, and where she could dress as she pleased, for one where the foibles of ceremonious society had to be taken into account, and where a sop had to be thrown to the Cerberus of fashion, if she desired to associate with people who were her

equals in station. She had shrewd common sense enough to understand that, whilst in New York and the States, she was Miss Kershaw of Angelica City, a personality whom most people knew, and who could afford to dress as simply or as oddly as she pleased,—in Europe the customs and habits of society would have to be considered, and she would not be able, for instance, to go to a dinner party in her ordinary walking dress, without attracting uncharitable notice.

Much as she disliked it, therefore, at first, she had to hand herself over to the tender mercies of the fashionable dressmaker. But appetite comes with eating, and whether it was that the enthusiasm of the modiste about gorgeous gowns, and mantles, and what not was contagious, or that the young lady had never really understood what delight the female mind can find over the selection of materials, the all-important decisions anent cut and shape, and especially over that super-

latively exciting occupation of trying on, Miss Angel's opinions about frocks and frock-builders gradually, but surely, underwent a complete change, and she was as happy over her newly discovered excitement as a child over a new toy.

Miss Kershaw was closeted with her philosopher and guide, the fashionable milliner and dressmaker, deep in the study of the intricacies of the last Parisian edicts relating to frocks, when Hubert Underwood was admitted below, and immediately proceeded to the library, where he hoped to find Daniel Kershaw.

The young man was pale. His eyes wandered about the room restlessly, and his hands trembled. Mr. Kershaw happened to be momentarily absent, and to the young journalist the few minutes that elapsed before the millionaire entered the library appeared interminable.

The old pioneer at once noticed the peculiarly nervous condition of the usually so calm

and unexcitable young man, and immediately faced him with the remark—

"Thar's somethin' gone crooked, boy, I know. What is it?"

"Mr. Kershaw," answered Underwood, "I had intended, if possible, to spare you the worry and annoyance which are bound to arise from the disclosure I have to make to you, but matters have taken such a turn that I deem it my duty to tell you what has happened."

"Hold hard," exclaimed the old man. "I guess what yew're goin' to tell me ain't as sweet as maple sugar, an' if yew don't mind, I'll sit down to it. Now, my boy," he continued, seating himself in his big armchair, "yew can start, an' run, an' race, an' have the whole length o' the road."

"My father, the father of whom I have such reason to be ashamed," continued Hubert, with an anxious tremor thrilling in his voice, "is in New York. He has been in New York for some days."

It was Daniel Kershaw's turn now to feel his nerves tingling with an unaccustomed trepidation. He had faced dangers of all kinds over and over again ; he had laughed gaunt death in the face on scores of occasions ; but shame, and especially shame and distress to his Angel, affrighted him. A ghost had haunted him for two or three days past, a ghost called up by Michael Turner's face which he had seen from his window, the ghost of Hellfire Joe that scowled at him of a night, and glared at him from odd corners of his dreams, and pointed with claw-like fingers to its torn and swollen neck, and cried, "What right have you with my daughter? Give up my daughter! Tell her that you killed me!"

"Waal," he said slowly, "that ain't news as one would print, an' buy a frame for, an' hang in the parlour ; but I guess it wos to be some day or other. I reckon he wants money, an' he'll have to have it."

"I have given him money," retorted Under-

wood bitterly, "but it is like droplets thrown into the ocean. The more you give, the more he wastes in debauchery, and the more he wants. That would be little, but he has just escaped from jail and there is no crime that he would not commit, when in drink, or to get drink. He made a great show of being anxious to reform, and very nearly succeeded in throwing dust in my eyes. Luckily he betrayed himself, and he betrayed himself over a real or pretended grudge against you."

"Agin me?" cried the old man in astonishment. "What's he got agin me?"

The whole story had to be told—the sore had to be laid fully bare.

"He says," continued Hubert with slowly nervous deliberation, "that you hanged his partner, Hellfire Joe, that you nearly hanged him, that Miss Kershaw is Hellfire Joe's daughter, and that he will not allow her to remain in ignorance of her father's name."

The old frontiersman had risen slowly, with

blanching face, and stonily hardening features, silent and grim. Gradually the heaving bosom swelled, the lips opened, showing the teeth hard set, and a fierce solemnity, the solemnity of outraged justice, shone in his eyes.

"Mike Turner yewr father," hissed Kershaw, "an' he'll tell my Angel that her father was a murderer, an' that I hanged him. Not much he won't, I reckon. Whar is he?" he demanded nearly savagely.

"I have him safe for the moment," answered Underwood, aghast at the impression his announcement had made upon the millionaire. "He is under lock and key in a small hotel in Canal Street, and the proprietor is keeping watch and guard over him."

"But yew cayn't keep him thar for ever," cried the pioneer. "Let's keep our heads cool, an' see that the primin's dry. It won't do now to go to Yewrup, an' leave him hyar. That would look cowardly, an' no man or devil shall ever say that Dan'l Kershaw was afraid of him.

It ain't yewr fault, my boy, that Cheeseiface Mike is yewr fathèr, any more than it's my Angel's fault that Hellfire Joe was hers."

He had confessed the hard naked truth without knowing that he had confessed it, but, now that it was told, he felt the load of a millstone taken from his mind. For years he had jealously guarded the secret. Now another man shared it, the man of all others most likely to shield, with the bulwark of his own life, her whom it threatened.

And Hubert, knowing that his betrothed was of as lowly, as mean, and as despicable birth as himself, was so steeped in his love that he felt not even a tinge of added joy over the discovery which brought Angelica Kershaw to a nearer level with himself. She was not lowered a hairsbreadth in his esteem, in his reverence, in his adoration. Only a tremorous pity, a tender sorrow that anointed his love and made it a trifle softer and balmier. Not a remark, not an exclamation of surprise

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escaped from his lips. His Angel was his Angel, and he would as lief have chided a butterfly for having sprung from a chrysalis, as have dreamed of deeming it a reproach that she was as low-born as himself.

"I guess yew've got to let me handle that father o' yewrn," continued Daniel Kershaw. "It ain't to be reckoned as yew'd keep the grip on him another man could. He ain't quite a dog-gone fool, Cheese-face Mike ain't. If he's jest escaped from pris'n, he knows that he can be sent back agin. He may think that his own son wouldn't do that, but he's tasted samples of my pepper afore, an' I guess his mouth is smartin' yet. Thar's two things to be did. Mike Turner's got to be made to keep a close tongue, and"—here the old man's voice dropped, and a tremor vibrated through it—"my Angel's got to know that I ain't her father."

"But surely——" exclaimed Hubert.

"Oh, don't yew go an' frighten yewrself,"

interrupted Kershaw. "I ain't goin' to tell her nothen about Hellfire Joe an' his gallows. Thar ain't nothen to be gained by that. But I count as I got to be honest at last, an' tell her as I've stole her love, an' beg her to forgive me—to forgive me."

The voice became softer and nearly tearful as he went on. It was the voice of a poor repentant sinner proclaiming his hope of a pardon to come.

"Yes, my boy," he repeated, "I've stole her love; an' what's more," he added with a stern resolution, "I mean to keep it, God bein' willin', all the days of my life. Now yew go down town, an' if it can be did, yew bring that father o' yewrn to me hyar. If it cayn't be did, yew come back an' let me know, an' I'll go down to him."

"It's ony right," he muttered when the young man was gone. "It wasn't fair to start with, an' God knows I've tried to fight agin it, an' tell her of it this many a year past,"

The young lady was in a pretty pout at being disturbed.

"What a bother, daddie dear!" she exclaimed as she came into the room, radiant with the glow of agreeable excitement. "Mrs. Mortimer is up stairs, and her assistant, and she has to go back nearly immediately, and she can't wait."

"Sit down here, my Angel," he said softly. "Never mind the dressmaker for a few minits."

"A few minutes?" she cried, pursing her pretty lips. "A few minutes?"

"Yes, a few minits," he replied. "Perhaps ten—perhaps fifteen. Yew'll give them to yewr daddie, won't yew, if he asks yew?"

"Why, you're as serious as a judge, daddie dear," rejoined Miss Angel, seating herself on a footstool at his feet and looking up into his eyes. "What *is* the matter? What has happened?"

He took her head between his two hands

and kissed her upon the forehead, long and fervently.

"I love yew so, my Angel," he breathed. "I believe I'd die if I were forbid to love you. I ain't much of a hand at sayin' whys, nor wherefores, nor hows, but I know that yew're settled jest here—jest on my heart, an' growed thar."

"I know this, daddie darling," she whispered surprisedly. "I have known it ever since I've been able to understand what it is to be loved."

"An' yew love me, my dear," he continued in the same tenderly vibrating half-broken voice. "Yew love me as a good gell ought to love her father. Tell me, dearie, do yew love me because yew think I'm yew father, or do yew love me because it's yewr nature, an' yew cayn't help lovin' me?"

She looked up at him with her big, dark eyes brimming with her heart's full devotedness.

"What a question to ask, daddie!" she said smilingly. "I love you *because* I love you.

Because you're the dearest daddie in the world; because not to love you would be impossible."

"Ah, would it?" he retorted. "Suppose—jest suppose—I wasn't yewr father. Suppose yewr father was dead an' gone long ago, an' I've taken his place, and given out as I was yewr father."

His eyes were glued upon her as he spoke. He watched every movement of her features, as if all his heaven were staked upon her reply.

"I don't want to suppose any such thing," she answered. "What is the good of it?"

"Answer me," he pleaded. "Suppose it was. Suppose I wasn't yewr father—how would it be then?"

"Why, if it were so," she replied with drooped eyes, and the fingers of one hand nervously moving across the open palm of the other, "you have been my father—I know no other. I can remember no other—I can think of no other."

"But if I had told yew lies," he went on in

a hoarse stoniness,—“if I had told yew stories that wasn’t true, becos I had to say somethin,’ yew know, when yew asked questions,—an’ yew did ask a lot, yew know—all sorts of ’em—about yewr mother, an’ about things—an’ I, I told them one after another, an’ one wickeder than another. Becos, yew see, my dearie,” he cried in an agony of confession, “I am *not* yewr father, an’ I’ve lied to yew all this while. An’ now it’s had to come out, an’ yew’ll despise me.”

He turned his face aside and buried it in his hands.

She, slowly and gently, and with the tears of piteous sympathy welling in her eyes and rolling over her cheeks, drew his fingers aside from where they rested, and encircling his neck with her soft arms, pressed her face against his, sobbing as if her heart-strings were overstrained in their effort to make sweet music.

“No, daddie darling,” she cried. “Never, daddie darling—never, now, in this life which

is yours—never, now or hereafter. *You* not my father? There is only one for me beside you—the Master in Heaven. A thousand times more my father now, than you ever could have been.”

And kissing him again and again in such holy embrace as a daughter may give to her parent, she laid her head on his bosom, and the sturdy pioneer wept with her as though they both were children.

She pulled out her handkerchief and dried his eyes and hers at the same time.

“Listen to me, my Angel,” he whispered. “I’ll have it off my chest—as much of it, at any rate, as yew need be told.”

A shiver of self-reproach went through him at that moment, as he reflected that a portion at least of the dread facts would have to be concealed from her.

“Yew was a tiny wee babby,” he went on slowly and stolidly, “when yewr father died—jest about three year old—an’ you had no one in the wide, wide world to give yew as much

as a drop o' water—no father, no mother, no sister, no brother, no nobody. I knowed yewr father. He was not a very good man, but it ain't my place hyar to say a word agin him afore yew, his daughter. Yew wos the prettiest babby that I ever seed, an' the moment I set my eyes on yew I took to yew, an' yew took to me. You could barely toddle then, an' I wos as pleased as a squaw over a new red blanket to have a little thing like yew crowin' at me when I cum home from the mountins or from prairie loafin'. An' then yew growed, an' the more yew growed, the more yew got to be a need to me, an' I would rather have done without my pipe, an' my whisky, fifty times aye, than without yew. An' then yew got to be old enough to talk, an' to ask about things, an' then the lies had to begin, an' you called me daddie, an' I didn't like to say nay to that—it would have hurt me to say nay to that. Then all the folks about called yew Kershaw's little wench, an'



I didn't say nay to that either, an' the bigger yew growed, the prettier you growed, an' yew got to be just a bit of my heart like, an' a man might as easy have cut a slice o' that out, as yew. Then I got rich, an' the gold cum tumblin' in, waggins full, an' I wos glad it cum. I said to myself, that's all for my Angel, an' that pleased me, yew know, an' made me work harder, cos I had yew, my dearie, to work for. An' yew growed quite a lady, an' so hensum, an' so lovin', an' so kind to me, an' all the people loved yew, an' I wos so proud that they did love yew, an' though I often did think of tellin' yew, I never had the heart to do it till now. An' now I have told yew, an' yew haven't called me names, an' yew've kissed me, an' I'm happier than ever. I wos, cos I've told yew what you ought to have knowed years ago."

He raised her and drew her to his breast, and enfolded her slight frame with his great strong arms, and pressed her to his heart, and

neither of them uttered a whisper for the space of a minute or two.

"Do not speak of this again, daddie darling," she breathed. "I want to know no more about it. I am doubly your child, for now my sense of gratitude is awakened, and I am beginning to feel how much I owe to your love. But for you, I might be a poor, wretched, forlorn waif of the prairies—a straw cast before the winds—and here I am rich, respected, beloved, and cared for. I have not yet been able to arrive at a full appreciation of my debt to you ; but I will soon, daddie dear I will. But I'll love you all the more, if that be possible. I'm a fright," she exclaimed with changed countenance, jumping up and regarding herself in the mirror, "and Mrs. Mortimer will think that you've been scolding me, and have made me cry. I don't care," she added brightly, smoothing her tresses and cooling her glowing face with her handkerchief ; "let her think what she likes."

She blew a kiss to him, as she paused for a moment at the door.

"God bless you, daddie darling," she whispered, and was gone.

Gone like a soft breeze that has cooled the burning face. Gone like a bounteous shower that has refreshed the sun-scorched plain. Gone like blessed charity that leaves its happiness in its wake. Gone as love does go, when it has brought life and hope, and has promised to return.

The pioneer was sitting in his arm-chair dreamily, as he had never remembered himself before. A doubt still battled in his mind. Ought I to have told her all? he deliberated with himself. Ought I to tell her still? No, no, no, no! came the answer of his conscience clear as a clarion; you must not break her young heart, and blast all her life with the cankering thought that her father was an assassin.

At that moment young Underwood appeared

at the door, paler even than he had been earlier in the morning.

"What's the sign now?" asked Kershaw.  
"Is thar a painther loose?"

"No," gasped the young man, "but a creature that's far worse. My father has got away again."

"Got away!" exclaimed the pioneer.  
"Waal!"

"He has nearly murdered the landlord of the hotel," continued Underwood. "He made a ghastly horrible sling-shot by filling a heavy tumbler with the iron tops screwed off from the fire-irons, and trying the lot in a handkerchief. He lay in wait behind the door for the poor man, and when the latter entered to give him his luncheon, he struck him a fearful blow over the back of the head, breaking the tumbler into half a dozen pieces and fracturing the skull. It is doubtful whether or not the wounded man will live, and in the hurry and skurry my father got clean away."

“Waal, boy, what do yew propose to do?” asked Kershaw.

“Heaven only knows,” replied the journalist. “There’ll be a trial now, and an exposure, and Miss Angelica may hear all about it, for the old villain will certainly not hold his tongue. O God,” he cried, “is it a sin to wish one’s own father dead?”

## CHAPTER X.

*YET FROM THESE FLAMES NO LIGHT.*

ABOUT half a mile beyond the outskirts of the ancient city of Newark, in the State of New Jersey, and a little more than fourteen miles from New York, on a gently sloping eminence whence the wayfarer could look down upon the verdant valley of the Passaic River, stood a small, two-storeyed house. It was built partly of brick, partly of wooden frames, after the fashion of many American country dwellings that date from the fifties and sixties of the present century. A pleasant green-painted verandah ran along its front, smothered for one half of its length by a luxuriant fruit-laden vine, and on the other, by a climbing tea-rose in all

its wealth of perfumed bloom. There was no fence ; a lengthy patch of ground at the back was laid out partly as a kitchen and partly as a flower garden, and two or three outbuildings were grouped there in a straggling disorder. Five or six mighty elms clustered at the side of the house, hoary giants which most probably the early settlers saw already in their shady glory, when they founded Newark, shortly after the Great Fire of London.

It was a pleasant, homely dwelling, neither very poor looking, nor showing evidences of wealth, or even of abundant comfort. Had it not been for the flower and grape glowing greenery on the verandah, it might have been deemed the residence of a workman or of a humble clerk. It actually afforded a home to a man who would have been poor, no matter what his income, for he persistently gave away what he had to those who were poorer than he. The Reverend Gideon Casey, Minister of the Baptist Chapel that peered just over the head

of the eminence a little way beyond, had not an income that could by any stretch of imagination be termed liberal. There are plenty of wealthy congregations and of well-paid clergymen in Newark, but Mr. Casey's chapel was newly established, and his congregation numbered but few really well-to-do members. In the result Mr. Casey, and his wife Agatha, lived in the most frugal style; their home was of the plainest, and whoever asked for it was welcomed to share their simple fare.

One summer night Gideon Casey, his wife, and Joseph Bliss, a young school teacher who resided with them, were sitting in the little parlour of the minister's residence. It was a dark night, moonless, and rough, and the wind howled among the leaves of the great elms and whistled around the corners of the house in a kind of dismal wail. Some country carts, the drivers evidently anxious to reach home before the breaking of the threatening storm, rumbled past at a gallop, making noise enough



to shake the slightly built structure into a rattling quiver. Altogether an uncomfortable night, and yet warm withal, for the heat during the day had been scorching, and the swishing wind had not yet succeeded in finally subduing it.

They were all sitting around the massive, square table that stood in the centre of the little room, Joseph reading, the minister's wife sewing, and the minister himself deep in the abstraction of mental notes for the next Sunday's sermons.

The back door was heard to slam, and on Casey looking up inquiringly, his wife reassured him with the statement that it was only Susan, the old serving-woman, who had most likely gone to the outhouse to fetch something she required for the kitchen.

They went on, each with his separate occupation, while the wind rushed along the verandah in a plaintive, half-melodious whirr like a deep, prolonged whistle.

After a short space of time Mrs. Casey, listening more attentively, tapped her husband on the arm and asked,—

“Did you hear that, my dear?”

“Did I hear what?” inquired the minister.

“I thought I heard somebody moving upstairs,” replied Mrs. Casey. “To be sure, there it is again. Listen!”

There was no mistake. Somebody was moving about in the room overhead, and not cautiously even, but roughly and unguardedly, for some article of furniture was heard to fall, at that moment, with a crash.

“It can’t be Susan,” said the lady. “I can’t imagine who it can be.”

“I’ll go and see what it is,” volunteered the young teacher, rising and moving towards the door.

“Suppose it is thieves,” exclaimed Mrs. Casey.

“Thieves,” retorted the minister with a laugh. “They are not so foolish. They

don't attack houses where there's nothing worth stealing. That kind of gentry always inquire in the neighbourhood, and they would soon learn that we have nothing worth their risk and trouble."

"If you don't mind, I will go and look, anyhow," suggested Bliss.

The young man had had barely time to reach the head of the stairs, and to enter the room above, when a dreadful noise of crashing and breaking of crockery, accompanied by a volley of oaths, reached the occupants of the lower room. They rose in a startled amazement, and the teacher came flying down the stairs, crying breathlessly,—

"It's a burglar! It's a burglar! Don't go near him, Mr. Casey. He has thrown the jug at me. He is dangerous."

This announcement provoked the minister's stolid face into a smile.

"Burglars who throw jugs," he remarked, "are not likely to be possessed of revolvers,

I'll have to interview the gentleman myself, I'm afraid."

To speak the truth, Gideon Casey, tall, stalwart, an athlete in the full vigour of his manhood, and not overburdened with flesh, was quite as formidable an opponent, his natural gentleness notwithstanding, as the average unarmed burglar would care to meet.

His wife clung to him.

"Don't go, Gideon," she pleaded. "Don't you go! Let him steal what he likes and go away."

"But suppose he doesn't go away," remonstrated the husband. "Suppose it is not a burglar at all, but a poor, harmless lunatic—and this looks much more like the action of a madman than of a thief—what then?"

"Well, leave him there," replied Mrs. Casey, "and send for somebody to lock the poor man up again."

"My dear," rejoined the clergyman, "it would take nearly three-quarters of an hour

to go to Newark, fetch a policeman, and come back again, and in the meantime that man upstairs may have broken our bedroom furniture into little bits, and perhaps have set fire to the place. I am too poor to afford that."

The burglar, or lunatic, or whoever he was, settled the question in dispute in *propria persona*, by tumbling headlong down the stairs, and alighting with an awful thud at the foot of them. The thud was followed instantly by a great bang, and a din, and rattle of smashing of glass and porcelain, in the midst of which a clock alarum went off with a swish and a whirr, and kept on ringing like mad.

These sounds, interspersed with groans and imprecations, brought Mr. Casey rushing into the hall, followed at a respectful distance by Mrs. Casey holding the lamp, and young Bliss, whose valour had oozed out altogether. The old serving-woman standing, shaking with fright, at the kitchen door, completed a Rembrandesque group.





"SHOW A LIGHT HERE, AGATHA," HE SAID; "THE POOR FELLOW IS I  
(P)

The clergyman, as coolly and as deliberately as if he had been performing one of his accustomed chapel duties, stepped to the man who was lying, a confused bundle of humanity, writhing and groaning, at the foot of the stairs

“Show a light here, Agatha,” he said ; “the poor fellow is hurt.”

When the light of the lamp fell upon the face of the intruder, it revealed the swollen, and by drink distorted features of a white-haired old man. His countenance was of a greeny ashen, ghastly and deathlike nearly. Blood trickled from his nose and mouth, and his short white moustache was smothered with it. The light also showed that the “poor fellow” had made a bundle by wrapping the bedroom clock, two vases, and a presentation inkstand in a small tablecloth, and that these had come to dire destruction by following the thief in his headlong fall downstairs.

“What a fearful face !” said Mrs. Casey pitifully. “You are right, Gideon, the man



is hurt. It was wicked of him to want to take away my only clock, but that is no reason for us to allow him to lie here unaided."

"He might as well have taken your clock away for all it is worth now," rejoined the husband. "Will you help me, Mr. Bliss? Let us take him into the back bedroom, and see what is the matter with him."

The man was apparently unconscious. Mere inarticulate groans escaped him; but when the clergyman and the teacher endeavoured to take him by the legs and shoulders, life and vigour seemed, on a sudden, to return to him, for he struggled and kicked with all his might, viciously.

"Damn yew," he cried, sitting up and glaring about him, hitting out right and left, "leave me alone. Yew hurt me, yew swine. What are you staring at like a herd o' munchin' jackasses? Yew're drunk, all of yew! I want to go away—go away—d'yew hear—go away—go away—go away."

His voice became weaker and hoarser as he went on, and died away at last. His head rolled over on his shoulder, his whole body gave a convulsive shiver, and, sitting as he was he fell over sideways, and lay there quivering and moaning.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" cried Mrs. Casey in a nervous trepidation. "I hope the poor man isn't going to die. *Do* look to him, Gideon. It would be so awful if he were to die."

"You need have no fear of that, my dear," retorted her husband; "not at present, at any rate. My idea is that he is, at least, quite as much intoxicated as hurt."

"Intoxicated? cried Mrs. Casey in amazement. "An intoxicated burglar?"

"Yes, my dear Agatha," answered the clergyman, "we have been indeed favoured by fortune. Drunken burglars are rarities, but here is one of them. I think," he continued, "I shall be able to take him into the back bedroom now."

So saying, he took the limp figure of the wretched old man in his arms and carried him into the room at the farther end of the hall, and laid him on the bed there.

"Leave us a light, my dear Agatha, and go away for a moment or two," said Casey. "I will then see what is the matter with the man. You may stay and help me, Mr. Bliss."

When the good lady was gone, they undressed the old rogue, and found that neither limb nor bones were broken. There were contusions and bruises, and a big swelling at the side of the head from which blood was oozing, but beyond that no apparently grave hurts.

Casey, calling for warm water, sponge, and a towel, washed and dressed the old man's wound, and cleaned his blood-besmeared face. Under the warm contact the senile intruder's animation seemed to return, and he moved on the bed, rolling on to his side, and glaring at Casey and Bliss with fiendish, bloodshot eyes.

"To hell with Dan Kershaw!" he cried.  
"Curse Dan Kershaw!"

Then he began to laugh in an unearthly jabber, nearest resembling the noise that an irritated baboon might give forth.

"They wanted me to lock me in," he snarled, staring fixedly at Casey and Bliss. "Ha, ha, ha, ha! I guess his head's sore, an' the hair won't grow no more whar I hit him. Ha, ha, ha, ha! What do yew want heear?" he cried, raising himself on a sudden. "Go away, or I'll murder yew."

His diabolic eyes wandered all about the room as if in search of a weapon, and he waved a writhing arm about the air, and then sank down on the bed again, groaning and moaning.

"He's not a nice man to have in the house, Mr. Casey," the young teacher ventured to remark. "Don't you think I'd better go for a doctor and a policeman?"

"By all means go and ask Dr. Mills to

step around as soon as he can," answered the minister, "but what should we want a policeman for?"

"He attempted to rob you, and nearly succeeded," replied the young man.

"My dear Mr. Bliss," rejoined Casey, "I would as soon think of jumping on a baby for having slapped my face, as of giving this poor, wretched sinner into the charge of the police for having broken into my house. I pity the burglar who comes to rob *me*—he is a luckless wight, indeed."

A distance of over half a mile separated the clergyman's house from the surgeon's, and before the man of science arrived, the sufferer passed through several fits, whether of delirium or intoxication Casey could not tell. His language was so vile and unnatural, that the good minister had to close the bedroom door, for fear that his wife might be shocked and horrified. The old fiend cursed everybody in the world, himself included, Daniel Kershaw's

name springing to his lips at every second or third phrase.

When the doctor had examined his patient, he pronounced the old burglar to be suffering from delirium tremens. "I can have him sent to the police infirmary in the morning," he said. "There he will not only be properly taken care of, but punished as he deserves."

"I don't think I'll get you to do that, Dr. Mills," said the kind-hearted minister. "I would rather keep him here until he's well. I don't want any man to be punished for what he's done to me."

"But, my dear Mr. Casey," remonstrated the surgeon, "this may be a very dangerous character. He is very likely to be a dangerous character."

"You will admit doctor," retorted Casey with a smile, "that he is not very dangerous just now."

"It will be necessary to watch him, to sit up with him," continued the medico, "and you

and Mrs. Casey have important duties to attend to."

"We'll manage, Dr. Mills," answered the clergyman. "I require very little sleep. Three hours a night is quite enough for me, and I can get Mr. Bliss to relieve me."

"Well, if you will have it," said Dr. Mills, shrugging his shoulders, "it must be so. But it will not be a pleasant occupation, nor yet a thankful one. Fits of violence, of madness nearly, will alternate with periods of extreme depression and febrile weakness, and I cannot at this moment say how it will end."

Casey insisted on being allowed to have his way, and the surgeon reluctantly consented not to inform the police authorities.

"I'm sure I'm acting wrongly, Mr. Casey," he said. "The man may have committed all sorts of crimes before coming here."

"One cannot err by remaining on the side of mercy," answered the minister. "I am willing to take the sin of it on my conscience."

The clergyman had taken upon his shoulders a much more onerous load than he had bargained for. The old burglar, in his fits of frenzied delirium, seemed possessed of an altogether unearthly strength, and as these attacks lasted well through the night and into the early hours of the morning, Casey found himself at daybreak nearly exhausted, whilst the clothing he wore was rent and torn.

"It was just as well that I had on my gardening suit," he said to his wife as the latter brought him his milk and bread at five o'clock. "You will have a day's work in mending these things."

The old man was lying underneath the coverlet, with teeth hard set, and lips drawn apart in a hideous scowl.

Mrs. Casey shrank to her husband when she saw the distorted face in the broad daylight that fell through the window.

"Good gracious!" she exclaimed. "Look, Gideon! Surely you remember that man."



"I confess that I do not," replied the husband.

"Why, dear me," continued Mrs. Casey, "don't you remember that lad at St. Louis for whom you got a place as scullery boy on a steamboat. His father was a bad man—a dishonest man—and you helped the lad to get away from him."

"Yes, I recollect," answered Casey. "Hubert Turner, you mean. He has since taken the name of Hubert Underwood, and is doing very well. He is in New York now."

The old man had been listening, his eyes staring at the worthy couple all the while. At the mention of the name of Turner he pricked up his ears, and slowly raised himself on the bed.

"What have *yew* got to do with Turner?" he cried feebly. "It ain't *yewr* bisness, damn *yew*. I guess it don't consarn *yew* if I *am* Mike Turner. They're lookin' for me, aren't they, blast 'em. *Yew* go an' find Hubert

Underwood—that's my boy, yew know—ha, ha, ha, ha ! Tell him I'm goin' to show up that son of a hound, Kershaw—ha, ha, ha, ha ! He says Hellfire Joe's gell is *his* gell, an' it ain't true—he murdered her father, the villain."

He exhausted himself by launching forth a torrent of oaths, and the minister's wife covered her ears with her hands so as not to be compelled to listen. Then he sank back on to his pillow, gasping, panting, and moaning, and muttering subdued curses all the while.

"You see I was right," said Mrs. Casey timorously, when the old villian was lying quiet again. "It is that lad's father, and he is apparently more wicked than ever. Poor lad ! Poor boy !"

"I shall have to run over to New York," said the clergyman, "and let young Underwood know of this. He is the fit and proper person to be here. When Harry Fraser comes this morning, I will get him to stay here in my

place. He's as strong as a lion and as gentle as a lamb, and he'll take care that this man neither comes to harm nor does any while I am away."

"This wretched man has evidently some grudge against that Mr. Kershaw," suggested Mrs. Casey. "Can that be that very rich man who owns a whole city out West?"

"Most likely," said the minister. "So much more reason for speedily informing young Underwood."

Harry Fraser, a burly, thickset lad of some nineteen years, took the clergyman's place by the old man's bedside shortly afterwards, and within an hour Casey was seated in the train bound for New York. At Newark depôt he bought the morning paper, an extravagance he did not often permit himself, his newspaper, reading recreation being generally confined to such journals as one or two of his parishioners sent to him after having themselves perused them.

While the train was rushing along towards Jersey City, he enjoyed the luxury—a rare one to him—of reading the morning's news on the morning of publication.

The reports of police court proceedings, and all the usual harvest of crime that is daily gathered in the records of a big city, had little attraction for the Baptist minister ; and had not his eye accidentally lighted upon the name of Turner, he would have passed the column of criminal news and reports without notice.

The name attracted his attention, and he sat aghast at reading the following paragraph.

“AN ESCAPED CONVICT DOESN'T RELISH  
BEING LOCKED IN, AND BREAKS THE  
LANDLORD'S HEAD.

“A murderous attack was made yesterday forenoon upon Edward Watkins, the proprietor of the Nelson Grand Hotel, a sailors' boarding-house in Canal Street, by Michael Turner, better known in criminal society as Cheese-face Mike, and old thief, burglar, road agent, and hard case generally, and one of the convicts who broke out of the jail at Cleveland, O., a short time ago. Cheese-face Mike

claims to be related to one of the most respected, most honourable, and most brilliant of the rising journalists in this city. The latter had arranged for his unworthy relative to be boarded at the Nelson Grand Hotel, but knowing that the old villain would most likely make a whisky barrel of his precious carcase, and then set out to paint the town red, and make things nasty for peace-loving citizens, he got the boss of the hotel to turn the key on his boarder until some decision could be arrived at concerning him. The old scallawag strongly objected to this interference with his temporary liberty, and took cogent measures to get level with the man who was keeping him locked in. He tied a big tumbler and some heavy pieces of iron in a handkerchief, and when Edward Watkins' cranium was surgically examined after having come in violent contact with Cheeseface Mike's improvised sling-shot, it was found to be severely indented, fractured, and in a generally unseaworthy condition. The police are, at this moment, making kindly inquiries after Mike's state of health and location of residence, but these have hitherto proved resultless, as Cheeseface Mike ungraciously departed from the Nelson Grand Hotel without leaving his prospective address."

The paper fell from the clergyman's hands.

"Poor Underwood!" he muttered. "It is a mercy of God, perhaps, that the man came to my house."

## CHAPTER XI.

### *RELEASE AT LAST.*

THE minister, on inquiry at the office of Hubert Underwood's paper, found that the young journalist was absent.

"He's been up all night," said the clerk, "and he has left word that anybody calling for him was to be sent to Mr. Daniel Ker-shaw's house on Fifth Avenue."

That was unfortunate for Mr. Casey. A ride in the tramcar would mean further expense, therefore the sturdy clergyman set forth uncomplainingly to walk the whole distance.

In the library of the great mansion on the fashionable avenue Casey found both Underwood and the old millionaire, and the young

man of letters greeted his former protector with a hearty welcome, and introduced him to Kershaw in such grateful and glowing terms that the bashful preacher found himself at his ease immediately.

Doubly, trebly welcome was he, though, when he proved himself bearer of the reassuring news that the wretched cause of so much anxiety was not only temporarily bereft of the power of further mischief, but in a place where fear of exposure, resulting from his recapture and return to the convict prison, might perhaps be sensibly reduced and minimised.

"We'll have to thank God for havin' granted us this mercy," said Daniel Kershaw, "and now, if yew don't mind, Mr. Casey, Hubert an' I will travel to Newark with yew."

When they arrived at the minister's residence, they found Mrs. Casey, Bliss, and the lad Fraser in a state of dire anxiety and tremulous excitement.

"He is as fearful to look at, Gideon," whis-

pered the poor frightened lady, "as he is to listen to. I never in my life did think that one human creature could contain so much wickedness. He is dying, Gideon, I am sure he is, and that poor man will appear before his judge with a blasphemy on his expiring breath. It is positively too horrible."

Mrs. Casey proved to be right both in her surmise and in her description. Mike Turner was lying on the bed, huddled up, with his bony knees drawn nearly to his chest, and his lean, wasted hands clenched against his chin. His mouth was wide open, like that of a frightened and snarling wild animal, and unearthly noises proceeded from his throat, whilst his piercing eyes travelled all around the room in frenzied rolling. He seemed to recognise none of the visitors, his son included, but kept on muttering in some unintelligible gibberish.

The pioneer and the clergyman remained standing at the door as if rooted to the spot, and even young Underwood paused for a



lengthy space of time. Then he stepped to his father's bedside, and looked the latter in the face, but the old man took no notice of him.

"What a fool yew are, Joe!" he cried on a sudden. "Come with me! Come with me! They'll take yew. Leave the rotten kid. The derved fool! Ah!" he grunted, "I knowed it. That's Dan Kershaw. Thar he is. Oh, the swine! Curse him!"

He waved Hubert aside on a sudden.

"I cayn't see him," he cried. "What have they done with him? an' thar's snakes about these rushes—snakes an' rats, snakes an' rats. Do yew see that big black one thar, an' that long one with the white belly? Ah, the beasts! the nasty beasts! Get away!"

He brushed off an imaginary creeping creature, and wiped an invisible slime from his limbs, panting, gasping, and shaking.

"I daren't go away," he continued. "I daren't move my head; an' the water is up to

my neck nearly, an' I cayn't hold on much longer. An' thar's those snakes agin, blacker an' thicker than ever. I guess it ain't no use my caching; they'll find me, an' they'll hang me as they hanged Joe."

On a sudden his voice took a wailing tone.

"I'm so thirsty," he cried. "Water! water! water! For the love o' the Lord, give me a drink o' water."

Hubert went to the toilet table, and fetching a glass of water, brought it to his father, and held it to his lips. The old man quaffed it greedily, holding the glass with shaking hands, and moistening his lips with his tongue for some little time afterwards. He stared with mad, fixed eyes at Hubert when the latter returned.

"Oh, it's yew," he said, in a tone of such perfect commonplace as to become grotesquely awful. "Yew've come to look at me, an' a nice sight yew are, with all those black creepin' things runnin' over yewr hair, an' crawlin' out

o' yewr pockets! Put 'em down!" he cried more excitedly. "Shake 'em off, yew blamed fool! Yew might ha' known that yew oughtn't to bring 'em into a place like this."

He drew himself together in a shiver of disgust.

"Ugh!" he cried, "they're jumpin' over me. Hist! hist! Away! Get off!"

Then his tone changed again, and he commenced to sob aloud.

"I'm goin' to fall! I'm fallin'! Hold me! Catch me! Damn yew, why don't yew hold me?"

His voice became weaker, and lower, and quieter, and changed to a hoarse whisper. He lay on the bed quite still, but for the quivering of his limbs and the slight movements of his jaw.

Just then Dr. Mills entered the room.

"It seems that this man is a nice character, Mr. Casey," he said. "Mrs. Casey is frightened to death, and she says she

never heard such language in all her born days. And, do you know," he added, "there's a description out of a man who escaped from prison some time ago, and who, yesterday, nearly murdered a poor hotel-keeper in Canal Street, New York. I'll bet it's the same old ruffian who is lying here. I am going into Newark, and when I get there, I think I had better call at the police office and give information."

"Look at him, doctor," said the clergyman quietly. "I surmise he will soon be out of the reach of police officers, and you can save yourself and them the trouble."

The surgeon walked to the bedside, and examined the now nearly motionless man.

"It's a gone case, I am afraid," he said, "Dissolution has begun to set in. His whole system is impregnated with alcoholic poison, and the huge amount of strong drink he must have swallowed yesterday, together with the shock of his fall, have hastened what was, after

all, only a matter of months, I believe. But I think I must inform the police nevertheless. They are looking for the brute who attacked the hotel-keeper, and if this man is the criminal it will save them a lot of trouble."

"Do you think this is really necessary, doctor?" asked the minister.

"It's my duty," was the reply. "I don't see how I can get out of it. We might both of us be charged with concealing him, if I did not."

"Pray don't do anything that may get you into trouble, gentlemen," said Underwood. "I think it will be wiser, after all, to give the information. It will have to be done sooner or later, and it is best to keep within the strict letter of the law."

"It can't matter now," he added in a low voice, turning to Kershaw.

"Yes," answered the old frontiersman softly. "Thank God, he's past harming my Angel now."

All through that early afternoon Mike Turner writhed in the contortions and frenzy of delirium tremens. The paroxysm alternated with periods of extreme exhaustion, as the surgeon had predicted ; and after screeching, yelling, and cursing fiendishly for some minutes he would fall down on the bed, but for his gasping breath to all appearances a corpse, so ghastly greenish-white was the hue of his skin, whilst his shining eyes protruded from their sockets, and added to his unnatural aspect.

Angelica had been absent from home, on a bonnet and cloak surveying expedition, when her father and Hubert left the house ; but the latter had, by Kershaw's instructions, written a short note, informing her that they would not return for lunch, and perhaps be absent during the afternoon. The old pioneer, fearing that his daughter might grow uneasy, dispatched the lad Fraser to Newark with a telegram stating that he and Hubert were detained at the bedside of a dying man, and that they

would return as soon as they could get away, but that it might happen that their enforced absence would be prolonged into the night.

They had not to wait so long, though. As the early evening hours advanced, and the shadows of the great elms lengthened over the house and its verandah, it became evident, even to the untrained observer, that the end was approaching.

The good minister sat by the dying man's side, Bible in hand, reading the God-inspired phrases of the Psalmist to the unhearing ears of the wretch who was so soon to enter the awful portals behind which lay that which none may know, nor knowing, dare describe.

The sufferer lay quivering and shaking as in a palsy, but even these involuntary motions became weaker and less perceptible with every moment that passed, and his eyes turned glassy and were fixed in a horrid stare.

On a sudden he turned round convulsively, and raised himself to a half-sitting position,

and looked about him as in some childish amazement, smiling nearly.

"I guess this is queer," he said, in a voice as even toned as if he had read a paragraph in a newspaper, and were making a casual remark about it. "Whar's my head?"

He looked at those who surrounded him in a puzzled inquiry, his eyes scrutinising each in his turn.

"Ah, that's yew, boy," he said, continuing in the same awesome voice of commonplace, "an' Dan Kershaw, that's yew. Yew ain't seed Joe, I s'pose? Hang me, if it ain't funny," he went on. "Whar's my head?"

"My good man," said Casey solemnly, "if you have the power to understand, for the sake of your immortal soul in peril, try and repeat after me the words I will speak."

Turner glanced at the clergyman with a pitifully ludicrous smile.

"Yew are a coon, I reckon," he said, "but I guess I like yew—bully for yew."



"Try; for God's sake, try to understand," pleaded Casey; and then commenced fervently,—

"Our Father which art in heaven—"

"Our Father which art in heaven," repeated the dying man mechanically.

"Hallowed be Thy Name—"

"Hallowed—be—Thy—Name," came from Turner's lips, more hoarsely than before.

"Thy kingdom come—"

"Thy—kingdom—come." The voice had become guttural and broken.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

"Thy—will—be—done—." So quietly now—a mere frightened whisper that faded away before the sentence was finished. With a look so changed, as if the closing eyes beheld something passing strange, Mike Turner sank back upon his pillow; the head rolled for a second or two to this side and that, and then lay still.

A dreadful silence prevailed in the room broken instantly afterwards by the bell-like tones of the minister praying for the peace of the soul that had fled.

"Sorry to intrude, gentlemen," said a gruff voice at the door, and as they looked round they beheld the burly form of a police officer, whilst another could be seen looming darkly in the hall.

"I don't know as I'm directed right," continued the man, "but I've got information that Mike Turner, an escaped convict, is to be found here, and I've got orders to arrest him."

The clergyman stepped aside and pointed to the bed whereon the dead man lay.

## CHAPTER XII.

*HIS ANGEL, THOUGH ANOTHER'S, WAS  
STILL HIS OWN.*

MISS ANGEL came down to breakfast radiant as a sunbeam. She kissed the old man with an airy grace which Zephyr might not have despised, and she pressed Hubert's hand with a soft touch that made the young man's fingers tingle.

Underwood had been staying in the house over night, in accordance with Kershaw's express wish, and the glance he sped towards his betrothed was brimful of expectant love. The young lady was in her happiest mood, Things had proceeded, and succeeded beyond all expectation. The milliner was a fairy, and the cloak-maker a dear, and Miss Angel's

admiration for the art and artifices of both these estimable ladies had become estatic. There were trunks full of wondrous frocks and mantles, and hats and bonnets upstairs. There were trunks full of more of these bits of gorgeous deliciousness in the housekeeper's room. There were trunks full of similar precious joys waiting to be despatched from the warehouse. And Miss Angel had tried them on each and all, and had admired herself in each and all. The simple, homely, plainly dressed Western girl had caught the fashionable infection, and offered sacrifices to the Moloch of female vanity with as light a heart as any of her more frivolous sisters.

“You must really come upstairs with me, daddie dear,” she said, “and I'll show you such wonders. There's a pale-blue gown of Indian silk, and a sea-green one—that's the fashionable colour in Paris, you know—and there's a perfect wonder of a steel-grey plush travelling cloak.”

"Yew want that now, dearie," replied Kershaw, a mischievous glitter twinkling in his eye. "I've bin thinkin' things over, an' I guess we ain't goin' to Yewrup."

The young lady opened her eyes wide, aghast.

"Not going to Europe?" she asked in amazement. "Not going to Europe? Why, what are you talking about?"

"I count as I know what I've bin sayin'," answered the old man blithely. "I said as we wasn't goin' to Yewrup; not jest now, at any rate."

"But this is awful!" exclaimed Miss Angelica. "This is real awful. Here I've been buying frocks and all sorts of things these days past, and now I'm not to wear them."

Her face assumed an expression so ludicrously dismal that the millionaire smiled in spite of a desperate attempt to appear serious.

"And why — for goodness sake, why,"

pleaded Miss Kershaw, "aren't we going to Europe?"

"Becos," answered Kershaw, continuing in the same humour of teasing his adopted daughter, "Sairitoga's nearer."

The mournfully dimmed eyes brightened a trifle at the announcement, and Miss Angelica crept to the old man's side, and fetching a footstool, sat herself down at his feet.

"There's something in this, daddie dear," she breathed, "that I cannot undertand. Why this sudden change of our plans?"

"It's jest this, yew puss," replied Kershaw beaming down on her. "I've made my pile in the States, an' I don't see why I shouldn't spend it thar. So we'll go to Sairitoga, an' then we'll have a run round an' have a look at Washington—yew've never seen the Capitol, yew know; an' then we'll go to Florida, an' then cum back heear a bit an' at the ehd o' that about a year will be gone, an' then we'll go to Angelica City. An' then if all's right.

an' nice, an' prosperous, as I hope it will be, thar's a Baptist chapel at Angelica as I am goin' to have livened up a bit, an' thar is to be a big weddin', I don't see why it shouldn't be in our own home, amongst our own people, that have loved us all these years."

"Thank you, daddie darling," she whispered. "You are always right, and it was I who was foolish. That will be better perhaps, after all."

"On Tuesday, 5th August, at the Baptist Tabernacle, Angelica City, Col., by the Rev. Gideon Casey, Minister, Hubert Underwood, of New York City, to Angelica Kershaw, only daughter of Daniel Kershaw, Esq., of Angelica City."

He was happy, so happy, for his Angel, though another's, was still his own.

